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WORKS

Of the MOST REVEREND

Dr. EDWARD SYNGE,

LATE

Lord Archbishop of *Tuam* in *Ireland*.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

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DAVID WARD STINGE

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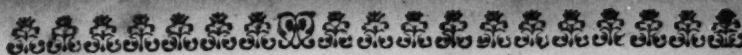
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C O N T E N T S

O F T H E

F I R S T V O L U M E.

- I. **A** HELP to the devout Performance of private Prayer.
- II. Plain Instructions for the Young and Ignorant, comprized in a short and easy Exposition of the Church Catechism.
- III. Some short and plain Directions for spending one Day well, by which (if every Day carefully observed) a Man may be much enabled (through God's Grace) to spend his whole Life well.
- IV. An Answer to all the Excuses and Pretences, which Men ordinarily make for their not coming to the Holy Communion: To which is added, A brief Account of the End and Design of the Holy Communion, the Obligation to receive it, the Way to prepare for it, and the Behaviour of ourselves both at and after it.
- V. The Way to eternal Salvation plainly pointed out.
- VI. A Persuasive to the Study of the Holy Scriptures, in a Letter to a sober Gentleman of the Church of Rome.
- VII. Some Rules for the Conduct of Human Life.
- VIII. An Essay on foolish Questions, another on contending for the Faith, being the Substance of two Visitation Sermons.
- IX. Eternal Salvation the only End and Design of Religion.
- X. Divine Authority of Church Government and Episcopacy stated and asserted upon Principles common to all Christians.
- XI. A Sermon before the House of Commons at *Dublin*, October 23, 1711.
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TO THE

DEVOUT PERFORMANCE

OF

Private P R A Y E R.

MARK viii. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation; of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the Holy Angels.*

2 THESS. V. 17. *Pray without ceasing. In every Thing give Thanks: For this is the Will of GOD in CHRIST JESUS concerning you.*

By the Moſt Reverend Dr. EDWARD SYNGE,
Lord Archbiſhop of Tuam in IRELAND; Author of
An Answer to all the Excuses and Pretences, which Men uſually make for their not coming to the Holy Communion.

The SECOND EDITION Corrected.

L O N D O N,

Printed for THOMAS TRYE, near Gray's Inn Gate in
Holbourn. M D C C X L.

Price 1 d. or 6 s. per Hundred.)

TO THE
Serious and Devout READER.

THE following Paper is written for the Use of a sober Man, who, having always had some Sense of Religion, is yet sensible that he has not been careful in the Performance of the Duties of it; and particularly in that of PRAYER; wherein he has often lamented that he has found his Thoughts usually very apt to wander. For which Reason the Forms here recommended to him, are divided into short Paragraphs, that he may the more easily keep his Mind attentive to them. I hope they may be of some Service both to him and others: And if a Man will take the Pains to commit them, or others of the like Import, to his Memory; he may pray in a Manner acceptable to GOD, not only in his Closet, but wherever else he is or may be.

There is nothing in any of these Forms but what may, with a good Conscience, be made use of by Christians of all Persuasions. And therefore I shall venture to recommend them to those of the Church of ROME, who desire to Pray with their Understanding, according to St. PAUL's Rule. 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

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A
H E L P
T O T H E
D E V O U T P E R F O R M A N C E
O F
P r i v a t e P R A Y E R.

S I R,

YOU desire to have such a Form of private Prayer composed for you, as may be well adapted to your Circumstances. The Forms which I here send you, I hope may be useful not only to yourself, but to others also; altho' their Circumstances may not be exactly the same with yours.

In the publick Worship of God, either in the Church or Family, the Devotion of the whole Congregation ought to be united; and it is by much the most convenient way that it should be expressed in such Words as are known beforehand; that all the People may prepare their Hearts to join in them. But in your private Devotions there is no Necessity that you should confine yourself to a certain Form of Words. For God knows your Thoughts. But yet a Form of Words may be of very good Use to keep you attentive to what you are about.

Whenever you are going to address yourself to God in Prayer whether Publick or Private; First compose your Thoughts, and withdraw them, as much as possibly you can, from every thing else,

and lift up your Mind in this or some such like Ejaculation.

“ **O** Great and glorious LORD GOD! possess my
 “ Mind with a devout and awful Appre-
 “ hension of Thy Greatness, Thy Goodness, Thy
 “ Justice, Thy Mercy, Thy Presence in all Places,
 “ and Thy Knowledge of all Things. And give
 “ me a just Sense of that great Privilege which
 “ Thou vouchsafest to us Thy Creatures, notwith-
 “ standing our Sinfulness and Unworthiness, of
 “ offering up our Supplications to Thee our Great
 “ Creator, and more especially in the Name, and
 “ through the Mediation of thy well beloved Son
 “ JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Make me attentive and
 “ devout in these my humble Addresses to Thee.
 “ Hear my Prayer, and let my Cry come unto
 “ Thee; for JESUS CHRIST’s Sake. *Amen.*

Whenever you go to the publick Worship of God; before the Service begins, offer up this or some such Ejaculation both for yourself and the whole Congregation: And then keep your Mind composed.

Under this general Word *Prayer*, four Things are contained. *First*, Confession of Sins, and begging the Pardon of them. *Secondly*, Praise and Thanksgiving to God. *Thirdly*, Intercession for all the rest of Mankind. And *Fourthly*, Petition for all the Blessings which the Person or Persons praying more immediately stand in need of. None of which ought to be omitted, whenever we solemnly address ourselves to God, whether publicly or privately. Altho’ it is not material in what Order they are placed. The Forms of these, which I here send you, are couched in few Words. Your Devotion will often prompt you to enlarge upon them (I hope) in your Thoughts, as you make use of them.

I. *A Form for the Confession of Sins, and begging the Pardon of them.*

“ **O** Great and Glorious LORD GOD! with
 “ Shame and Confusion I lay my Sins,
 “ which are very many, before Thee: And with
 “ Horror I consider the great Guilt which I have
 “ thereby contracted, and the Punishment which
 “ I justly deserve for them.

“ I have sinned in my Inclinations and Desires,
 “ in my Words and Actions.

“ I have sinned in my Childhood, my Youth,
 “ and my riper Age; through Haste and Passion,
 “ and with Thought and Deliberation, contrary
 “ to the Checks and Restraints of my own Con-
 “ science.

“ I have made Vows and Resolutions against
 “ particular Sins, and have not been watchful o-
 “ ver myself to keep them; but have returned to
 “ the same Sins again.

“ I have omitted and neglected to do those things
 “ which I ought to have done, and have done
 “ those things which I ought not to have done.

“ *Mine Iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that*
 “ *I am not able to look up; they are more than the*
 “ *Hairs of my Head; therefore my Heart faileth me*
 “ (Psal. xl. 12.) and would for ever fail me, were
 “ it not for thy Mercy in and through JESUS CHRIST,
 “ our Saviour and Redeemer.

“ O Gracious GOD! give me a just and deep
 “ Sense of my many and crying Sins. Make me,
 “ in a Godly manner, truly sorrowful and peni-
 “ tent for them, and grant me the full and free
 “ Pardon of them all, for the Sake of JESUS CHRIST.

“ Give me Grace, that I may be careful and
 “ watchful over my Thoughts, Inclinations, De-
 “ sires,

“ fires, Words, and Actions; and make them all
 “ conformable to thy holy Will and Law.

“ *Work in me both to will and to do of thy good*
 “ *Pleasure* (Phil. ii. 13.) work the Work of true
 “ Sanctification in me; and create in me a De-
 “ testation and Abhorrence of every Thing that is
 “ contrary to thy holy Will and Law.

“ Make me deeply sensible of, and in a Godly
 “ Manner penitent for the great and sinful Neg-
 “ lect, of which I have all along been guilty, in
 “ carrying on the Work of Sanctification within
 “ me. O grant me the full Pardon of all that is
 “ past; and make me careful and diligent for the
 “ Time to come, that I may never again return to
 “ my Sins. And this I humbly beg for the Sake
 “ of thy well beloved Son JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

“ *Hide thy Face from my Sin; and blot out all mine*
 “ *Iniquities. Create in me a clean Heart, O GOD;*
 “ *and renew a right Spirit within me. Cast me not*
 “ *away from thy Presence; and take not thy Holy*
 “ *Spirit from me. Restore unto me the Joy of thy*
 “ *Salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit.*”
 Psal. li. 9, &c.

II. *A Form of Praise and Thanksgiving to GOD.*

“ **A**LL Honour and Glory, Praise and Thank-
 “ giving be rendered unto Thee, O GOD;
 “ for thine infinite Excellencies and Perfections,
 “ whereby Thou so far excellest all other Things;
 “ which are but Thy Creatures, and the Work of
 “ Thy Hands.

“ For thy Mercy and Goodness to all Thy Crea-
 “ tures; particularly to Mankind.

“ For our Creation, and the rational Souls which
 “ Thou hast given us, endowed with so many
 “ noble Faculties.

“ For

“ For our Food, Raiment, and all the Necessaries, Conveniencies, and Comforts of this Life, which Thou hast so bountifully bestowed on us

“ For our Preservation from so many Dangers, wherewith we are every Day encompassed; and which we escape only by thy watchful Providence over us.

“ But above all, for the Knowledge of Thee, and of Thy Holy Will and Law, which Thou hast been pleased to give us, partly by our own Reason, and more fully by that Revelation which Thou hast made in Thy Holy Word, for the quietting of our Minds and Consciences here, and the guiding us to eternal Happiness hereafter.

“ For the sending of Thy beloved Son into this World, to take our Nature upon him, and to undergo so many bitter Sufferings for us, to redeem us from the Slavery of Sin, and the Punishment due to it, and to bring us to everlasting Life and Happiness.

“ For the Gifts and Graces of Thy Holy Spirit bestowed upon us, to further us in the Way of Salvation.

“ And for all the Means of Grace, and the well grounded Hope of eternal Glory, which Thou hast vouchsafed to us by our Blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

“ For these and all other Thy Blessings and Mercies to me and to all Mankind, I humbly offer up unto Thee my Praises and Thanksgivings; beseeching Thee so to touch the Hearts of us all with a due Sense of them, that we may shew forth thy Praise not only with our Lips, but in our Lives, by walking before Thee in Holiness and Righteousness all our Days; through JESUS CHRIST our Lord: To whom with Thee and

“ the

“ the HOLY GHOST be all Honour and Glory,
 “ World without End. *Amen.*”

III. *A Form of Intercession, or Supplication for all Men.*

“ NOT for myself alone, O GOD, but also
 “ for all Mankind, High and Low, Rich
 “ and Poor, Friends, Strangers, and Enemies, I
 “ offer up my Prayers and Supplications to Thee.

“ Spread the Knowledge of Thy Gospel and
 “ true Religion throughout the whole World;
 “ and bring all Men to the true Faith in Thee
 “ and Thy Son JESUS CHRIST.

“ Grant that All, who profess Thy Gospel, may
 “ lay aside all unnecessary Disputes and Contro-
 “ versies, and agree in those Things which Thou
 “ hast made necessary to eternal Salvation.

“ Grant that they may all live in the true Fear
 “ of Thee, in sincere Love and Charity one to-
 “ ward another; and in the conscientious Practice
 “ of Sobriety, Temperance, Chastity, Humility,
 “ and all other Christian Virtues and Graces:
 “ That *their Light may so shine before Men, that*
 “ *they, seeing their good Works, may glorify Thee our*
 “ *Heavenly Father.* Mat. v. 16.

“ Deliver Thy Church, every where, from Per-
 “ secution and Oppression; that all, who are peace-
 “ able and truly conscientious, may have the Li-
 “ berty of serving Thee with a pure Conscience.

“ Bless all Kings, Princes and Magistrates;
 “ more especially those who are of the true Faith
 “ and Religion; and among them more particu-
 “ larly, our Gracious Sovereign Lord King
 “ GEORGE, and all who are put in Authority un-
 “ der Him. Move and effectually incline all their
 “ Hearts impartially to administer Justice, duly
 “ tempered

“ tempered with Equity for the Good of Man-
 “ kind; and sincerely to promote Peace, Virtue,
 “ true Religion, and Piety throughout the whole
 “ Earth.

“ Together with our Sovereign Lord the KING,
 “ bless and prosper all the Royal Family: And
 “ grant that there may never want one of them, in a
 “ due Succession, to sway the Sceptre of these
 “ Kingdoms in Righteousness, Peace, and Pros-
 “ perity, as long as the World shall last.

“ Bless all the Bishops, Pastors, and Teachers
 “ of the whole Christian Church. Make them
 “ all holy and exemplary in their Lives, pure in
 “ their Doctrine, and faithful and diligent in the
 “ Discharge of their several Duties; that by their
 “ Means, through thy Grace co-operating with
 “ them, true and pure Religion, both as to Faith
 “ and Practice, may be planted and rooted in the
 “ Hearts of all who profess the Name of CHRIST.

“ Give us such Plenty of the kindly Fruits of
 “ the Earth, and make us so diligent, frugal, and
 “ prudent in the Management of them, as that
 “ no Man may want Food, Raiment, or the com-
 “ mon Necessaries of Life; and teach us all to be
 “ well content with whatsoever Thou shalt think
 “ fit to bestow upon us.

“ Look down upon all who labour under Po-
 “ verty, Pain, Sicknes, or any other Calamity.
 “ Sanctify their several Afflictions to them; give
 “ them Patience to bear them, and in thy good
 “ Time a happy Deliverance from them.

“ Pardon my Enemies, and turn their Hearts
 “ and mine to Love and Charity. Look down
 “ upon all my Friends and Acquaintance, and up-
 “ on all Mankind, and shower down thy Bless-
 “ ings spiritual and temporal upon us all, in such
 “ Manner

" Manner and Measure as Thou knowest to be
 " best and fittest for each of us, and most con-
 " ducing to our Support and Comfort here, and
 " our eternal Happiness hereafter; through JESUS
 " CHRIST our Lord. To whom, &c."

A short Form of Petition for yourself and Family.

" **O** Good God, look down upon me Thy un-
 " worthy Servant, and upon my Wife and
 " Family; and all the Blessings spiritual and tem-
 " poral, which I have prayed for in the behalf of
 " others, be pleased to shower down upon me and
 " mine, according to our Circumstances and Ca-
 " pacities.

" Again and again, I beseech Thee, make us
 " all truly penitent for all our Sins, thankful for
 " all thy Mercies, diligent in the Performance of
 " all Duties, and careful to avoid all Sin and Wick-
 " edness; and grant us the Pardon of all we have
 " done amiss in the whole Course of our Lives.

" Make us willing to die, whenever thou shalt
 " think fit to call us away; and fit and prepare
 " us, by true Faith, sincere Repentance, and a
 " holy Life, for Death and a happy Eternity; and
 " grant us an easy Passage out of this World, in
 " Peace and Quietness of Mind and Conscience,
 " and true Reconciliation with Thee, and, if it
 " be Thy blessed Will, without Pain or Torment
 " of Body.

" As long as Thou shalt be pleased to continue
 " us in this Life, grant to us Ease, Health, Strength,
 " a quiet and contented Mind, a right Understanding
 " Food, Raiment, and all the Necessaries of Life,
 " in such a Measure as thou knowest to be best and
 " fittest for us. But above all, grant us thy Grace,
 " that we may live holily, virtuously, religiously,
 " and

and piously here, and be eternally happy with
Thee hereafter. Continue this Blessing to my
latest Posterity.

“ And whatsoever thou knowest to be best and
fittest for us and for all Mankind, I humbly beg
in the Name and through the Mediation of thy
Son, our Lord JESUS CHRIST. To whom, with
Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and
Glory now and for ever. *Amen.*

“ *Our Father, &c. The Grace of our Lord
JESUS CHRIST, &c.*”

In the repeating or reading this Form of Prayer,
and more especially the *Lord's Prayer*; at the End
of each Sentence or Period, make a little Pause,
and recollect in your Mind what it is that you
have last said. This, with God's Blessing, will
be a good Help to keep your Thoughts from wan-
dering, and to make you attentive upon what you
are doing. For without Attention, there can be
no true Devotion.

This Form of Prayer, for the most Part, is con-
ceived in general Words. You may, in your own
Mind, insert what Particulars you shall think fit
in it, or make Additions to it, as you proceed in
the using of it. I pray for you, and am your, &c.

*I recommend to you the following Meditation; which
is an old Translation from the French. However
mean the Poetry may appear, I am sure you will
approve of the Sense of it.*

“ SWEET JESUS! who shall give me Wings
“ Of pure and Heav'nly Love;
“ That I may fly from earthly Things,
“ And dwell with Thee above? .

“ For

- " For There are Joys both firm and fast,
 " Where no Man doth lament;
 " But Here are Toys, which, first or last,
 " All mortal Men repent.
 " Therefore my Soul doth loath the Things,
 " Wherein she took Delight;
 " And unto Thee, the King of Kings,
 " Doth fly with all her Might.
 " But still the Weight of Flesh and Blood
 " Does so her Flight restrain,
 " That oft' I strive, but do small Good;
 " I rise and fall again.
 " Lo thus, Dear Lord, I fly about,
 " In weak and woful Case;
 " Like to the Dove *Noah* sent out,
 " Which found no resting Place.
 " My weary'd Wings, sweet JESUS, mark;
 " And when thou seest it best,
 " Stretch forth thy Hand from out the Ark,
 " And take me to thy Rest."

A short Meditation against the Fear of Death.

- " **W**HY should I fear what all must undergo?
 " Why should I fear the End of all my Woe?
 " Why should I fear the only Way to Bliss?
 " And without which no Happiness there is?
 " Why should the Weary fear to go to Rest?
 " The Course, which GOD has settled, sure is best.
 " The Sting of Death is gone: Why should I fear
 " What JESUS CHRIST enables me to bear?

F I N I S.

2

PLAIN
INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE
Young and Ignorant.

Comprised in a
Short and Easy EXPOSITION
OF THE
Church Catechism.

Adapted to the
Understanding and Memory of those
of the meanest Capacity.

By the Most Reverend
Dr. EDWARD SYNGE,
Late Lord Archbishop of *Tuam* in *Ireland*,
Author of the *Answer to all the Excuses and Pretences*
which Men usually make for not coming to the
Holy Sacrament.

My People are destroyed, for lack of Knowledge.
Hof. iv. 6.

The EIGHTH EDITION Corrected.

LONDON,
Printed for T. TRYE, near Gray's Inn Gate, Holborn.
MDCCL.

Price 3 d. or 20 s. per Hundred.



Rules for the profitable Use of this or the like Exposition.

1. **L**ET every Child be taught perfectly to repeat the Church Catechism.

2. When a Question of this Exposition is asked him, let him repeat the Answer without Book: if he cannot do that, let him read it distinctly.

3. Then let the Catechist again distinctly read the Question and Answer, and if he thinks fit a little farther explain them.

4. Lastly, Let the Child read such Text or Texts of Scriptures, as are at large set down under each Answer. And let the Catechist shew how each Text proves, or is applicable to the Point, to which it belongs.

It may be of good use to make such Children as are of Capacity, to write out the other Texts that are only noted (and the Catechist may furnish them with more Proofs, as he sees occasion) For which Purpose they may have Books interleav'd with clean Paper.

FOR a fuller Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, see *The Answer to all the Excuses and Pretences which Men ordinarily make for not coming to the Holy Communion. To which is added, An Account of the End and Design of the Holy Communion, &c. The Nineteenth Edition.*



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PLAIN
INSTRUCTIONS, &c.

Quest. 1.  What is your Name ?

Answ. M. or N.

Q 2. Who gave you that Name ?

A. My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism, wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Q. 3. What mean you by a Member of Christ ?

A. I mean a Member of the Church of Christ ; which in a spiritual Sense is called his Body, and he the Head of his Church. *Ephes. v. 23. The Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church : and he is the Saviour of the Body.* *1 30. chap. i. 22, 23. Rom. xii. 5.*

Q. 4. How do you prove that by Baptism you are made a Member of Christ's Church ?

A. Because Christ appointed, and his Apostles always used Baptism, as the way of admittance into the Church. *Matt. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. 41. chap. x. 47, 48. 1 Cor. xii. 13.*

Q. 5. What Benefit do we receive by having Christ for our Head, and by being Members of his Body the Church ?

A. As the natural Members in a Body do derive their Life and Sense from the Head ; so do we derive our spiritual Life and Grace from *Christ*. *John* i. 16. *Of his Fulness have all we received, and Grace for Grace :* and chap. xv. 4, 5, 6. *Eph.* iv. 16. *Col.* ii. 19. *Phil.* iv. 13.

/ *Q. 6. What do you mean by a Child of God ?*

A. I mean one whom God in an especial manner loves as a Father does his Child.

Q. 7. How do you prove that by Baptism you are thus made a Child of God ?

A. Because God receives and owns all true Members of *Christ's* Church, as his Children, *Gal.* iii. 26. 27. *For ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ,* *John* i. 12. *Rom.* viii. 15.

Q. 8. What is the Advantage of thus being a Child of God ?

A. We may with an humble Confidence offer up our Petitions and Requests to God, as a Child to his Father : assuring ourselves that God will hear us, and give us all things that are best and fittest for us, *Matt.* vii. 11. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children ; how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask him ?* ver. 7. *Eph.* ii. 18. *Heb.* iv. 16.

Q. 9. What do you mean by an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven ?

A. I mean one who has a sure Title to inherit everlasting Glory and Happiness with God in Heaven.

Q. 10. How do you prove that by Baptism you have a sure Title to the Glory and Happiness of Heaven ?

A. Because this is what God has promised to all true Members of the Church of *Christ*, *1 Joh.* ii. 25. *This is the Promise that he hath promised us, even eternal Life.* *Rom.* viii. 16, 17. *1 Pet.* i. 4. *Luk.* xii. 32.

Q. 11. But shall all they who are baptized into the

Church of Christ, most certainly inherit the Kingdom of Heaven?

A. Yes, most certainly; if they do not forfeit their Title to it, by breaking those Conditions which God requires from them.

Q. 12. What are those Conditions?

A. The very same that our Godfathers and Godmothers do promise for us at our Baptism.

Q. 13. What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then promise for you? I mean at your Baptism?

A. They did promise and vow three things in my Name: First, that I should renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh: Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith: And thirdly, that I should keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of my Life.

Q. 14. Who is the Devil?

A. The Devil is the chief of those Angels, who being created by God in a blessed and glorious State and Condition, were for their Wickedness cast out of Heaven into Everlasting Misery, *Psal. ciii. 20. His Angels that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkening unto the Voice of his Word.* See *Heb. i. 7. 2 Pet. ii. 4. God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into Chains of Darkness, to be reserved unto Judgment, Jude 6. Mar. xxv. 41.*

Q. 15. What are the Works of the Devil?

A. All manner of Sins are called the Works of the Devil, because the Devil is ever tempting Men to commit Sin, *1 John iii. 8. He that committeth Sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. For this Purpose the Son of God was manifest-*

ed, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. John viii. 44. 2 Cor. ii. 11. 1 Thes. iii. 5.

Q. 16. What is Sin?

A. Sin is the Transgression of God's Law, 1 John iii. 4. Rom. iv. 15.

Q. 17. What is it to renounce?

A. To renounce is to disclaim, disown, and forsake.

Q. 18. How do you prove that you are bound to renounce the Devil and all his Works?

A. Because God has commanded us so to do, Jam. iv. 7. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity. Eph. iv. 27. 1 Per. v. 9.

Q. 19. What mean you by the Pomps and Vanities of this World?

A. I mean the Riches and Honours of this World, as they are abused by wicked Men. Isa. v. 13, 14. Eccles. i. 2.

Q. 20. Are you then by your Baptism bound wholly to renounce all the Riches and Honours of this World?

A. No, for it is not unlawful to be Rich or Honourable in this Life. But, as a Christian, I am bound to renounce all that is wicked in them. That is to say, neither to set my Heart upon them (a), nor to make an evil Use of them (b), nor at any time be led by them astray from my Duty (c). (a) Col. iii. 2. Set your Affection on Things above, not on Things on Earth. See 1 John ii. 15. (b) 1 Cor. vii. 31. They that use this World as not abusing it. See James iv. 3. (c) 2 Tim. iv. 10. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present World. Luke viii. 14. Gal. vi. 14.

Q. 21. What do you mean by the sinful Lusts of the Flesh?

A. I mean all such Appetites and Desires, as are contrary to God's Law; however strongly our Fleshly Nature may be inclined to them.

Q. 22. How do you prove that you are bound to renounce all such Appetites and Desires? A Be-

A. Because God has commanded us all so to do. *Gal. v. 24. They that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts, & 19, 20, 21 Rom. xiii. 13, 14.*

Q. 23. What mean you by the Articles of the Christian Faith?

A. I mean those necessary Doctrines of Religion, which *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles have taught unto the Church.

Q. 24. Are you bound to believe these Doctrines?

A. Yes.

Q. 25. Why so?

A. Because God has made them known unto us by *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, and requires the Belief of them from all Men, *Mark xvi. 15, 16. Go ye into all the World and preach the Gospel to every Creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. 1 John iii. 23.*

Q. 26. But is it enough barely to believe that these Doctrines are true?

A. No. This is not enough. But this my Belief must effectually stir me up to perform my Christian Duty. That is to say, to **keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the same all the Days of my Life.** *Jam. ii. 14. What doth it profit, tho' a Man say, he hath Faith, and have not Works? Can Faith save him? &c Gal. v. 6. 1 John v. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 58.*

Q. 27. Dost thou not then think that thou art bound to believe and to do as thy Godfathers and Godmothers have promised for thee?

A. Yes verily, and by God's help so I will: And I heartily thank our Heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this State of Salvation through *Jesus Christ* our Saviour: and I pray unto God to give me his Grace that I may continue in the same unto my Life's end.

Q. 28. But suppose thou hadst never had any Godfathers

thers or Godmothers at all ; wouldst thou not yet be bound to observe and do all those same Things ?

A. Yes, certainly : For the Command of God would oblige me thereto ; although neither I, nor any one else in my Name had particularly promised them.

Q 29. How do you know which are the necessary Doctrines of the Christian Religion ?

A. I learn them from the Holy Scriptures ; which were written by the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists ; who were the Messengers of God and Jesus Christ to the World. 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. The Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness. 2 Pet. i. 21. John xx. 31. Luke i. 1, 2, 3, 4 Gal. i. 1.

Q 30. Canst thou rehearse the Articles or Parts of this thy Christian Belief ?

A. Yes I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth : And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord ; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost ; Born of the Virgin Mary ; Suffered under Pontius Pilate ; was Crucified, Dead, and Buried. He descended into Hell : The third Day he rose again from the dead : He ascended into Heaven ; and sitteth at the right Hand of God the Father Almighty ; from thence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost : The Holy Catholick Church ; The Communion of Saints ; The Forgiveness of Sins ; The Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting. Amen.

Q 31. What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief ?

A. First, I learn to believe in God the Fa-
ther

ther, who hath made me and all the World. Secondly, In God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all Mankind. Thirdly, In God the Holy Ghost, who hath sanctified me, and all the elect People of God.

Q 32. But let me examine thee a little more particularly : And First, what is God ?

A It is impossible for the weak and shallow Mind of Man fully to understand the Nature of God. Job xi. 7, 8, 9. Canst thou by Searching find out God ? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection ? It is as high as Heaven : What canst thou do ? Deeper than Hell : What canst thou know ? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.

Q 33. But how much is made known to us of the Nature of God ?

A First, That God is a Spirit (a). Secondly, That he is without beginning or ending (b). Thirdly, That he is most holy, just, and true (c). Fourthly, That he is most gracious and merciful (d). Fifthly, That he knows all Things (e.) Sixthly, That he can do all Things (f.) And Lastly, That he is every where, and not confined to any one Place (g).

(a) John iv. 24. God is a Spirit. See Heb. xii. 9. Acts xvii. 28, 29. Luke xxiv. 39. (b) Plal. xc. 2. Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. See Gen. xxi. 33. Rev. iv. 8. (c) Plal. cxlv. 17. The Lord is Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works. See Rev. iv. 8. Prov. xv. 9. Tit. i. 2. Heb. x. 23. (d) Plal. ciii. 8. The Lord is Merciful and Gracious, slow to Anger, and plenteous in Mercy. See Plal. cxxxvi. 1, &c. (e) Heb. iv. 13. Neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his Sight ; but all things are naked and open unto the Eyes of him, with whom we have to do. (f) Luke i. 37. With God nothing shall be impossible. See Matth. xix. 26. (g) Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. Am I a God

God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord? Psal. cxxxix. 7, &c.

Q 34. But how are you assured that there is such a Being as GOD, who is the Maker of Heaven and Earth?

A. There is so much Beauty, Order, and Usefulness in the Heavens and the Earth, and in all Things which I daily see, as does assure me that they could not come by Chance: But that they are made and settled in their Order by a most wise and powerful Being; that is to say, by Almighty God. Rom. i. 20. The invisible Things of Him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God head. Gen. i. 1. Psal. xix. 1, &c.

Q 35 How did God make the Heavens and the Earth?

A. By his Command, Psal. xxxiii. 9. He spake the Word, and it was done: He commanded, and it stood fast. Gen. i. 3, 6, 9, &c.

Q 36. Why do you give GOD the Title of Father?

A. Because he is pleased to own us for his Children, as I have already said. But chiefly because he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. i. 3. Eph. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3.

Q 37. How many Gods are there?

A. There is but one God. 1 Cor. viii. 4. There is none other GOD but one. Deut. vi. 4.

Q 38. But is not the Father God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God?

A. Yes: But these Three Persons are but one God. 1 John v. 7. The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: These Three are One. Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Q 39. What do you mean by this Word Christ?

A. The Word Christ signifies Anointed: But in the Holy Scripture it is put to signify an Extraordinary Person, whom God has promised to send into the World,

World, to be the Saviour of Mankind. *John* iv. 25. *I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: When he is come, he will tell us all Things.* Chap. vii. 13. 41.

Q. 40. But did God ever promise to send such a Person as this into the World?

A. Yes, in several Places of the Old Testament. *Gen* xxii. 18. *In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* Chap. iii. 15. and Chap. xix. 10. *Deut* ix. 25.

Q. 41. But how do you know that Jesus whom we acknowledge, is really and truly the Christ?

A. Because his Apostles taught it, and proved it beyond Contradiction, *Acts* xviii. 5, 28.

Q. 42. But by what Reasons or Arguments did they prove that Jesus is the Christ?

A. First, they proved it from the Scriptures of the Old Testament; because all the Prophecies which are there recorded concerning Christ, are exactly fulfilled in the Person of Jesus our Saviour. *Acts* xviii. 28. *Shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was Christ.* Chap. xxvi. 22, 23.

Secondly, They proved it from the many Miracles which were wrought by him, and in his Name. *Acts* ii. 22. *Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs.* *Matt* xi. 5. *John* x. 25. *Acts* vi. 8. and chap. xix. 11, 12.

Q. 43. But was Jesus ever anointed?

A. Not with Oil, but with the Holy Ghost, and with Power from God, *Acts* x. 38.

Q. 44. Why do you give to Jesus Christ the Title of the only Son of God?

A. Because he is so called in the Holy Scriptures. *1 John* iv. 9. *God sent his only begotten Son into the World.* *John* iii. 16, 18.

Q. 45. Has not God other Sons besides Jesus Christ?

A. Faithful Christians are said to be God's Sons.

But

But *Jesus Christ* is his Son after another and a more excellent Manner.

Q. 46. *In what Manner is Jesus Christ the Son of God?*

A. He is so the Son of God, as yet to be God together with the Father, before the Beginning of the World (a). And also Man, conceived and born of a pure Virgin, by the extraordinary Power of God (b).

(a) Rom. ix. 5. *Who is over all, God blessed for ever.* See John i. 1. Heb. i. 8. (b) John i. 14. *The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us.* Luke i. 35. Mat. i. 18, 20.

Q. 47. *Why do you give Jesus Christ the Title of Our LORD?* 1 Cor. viii. 6. John xiii. 13.

A. Because all Things are under his Power and Dominion (a). And also because he is in a particular Manner the Lord and Head of his Church, as I have already said (See Q. 3.)^o Mat. xxviii. 18. *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth.*

Q. 48. *How was Jesus Christ, as to his Human Nature, conceived and born?*

A. He was conceived by the Power of the HOLY GHOST, in the Womb of a pure Virgin, and born of her, Luke i. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* Mat. i. 18. 20, 22, 25. Luke ii. 6, 7. Gen. iii. 15.

Q. 49. *What did Jesus Christ Suffer?*

A. He was despitefully used; and at last was put to the Painful and Shameful Death of the Cross, Mat. xxvii. 1, &c. Mark xv. 1, &c. Luke xxiii. 1, &c. John xix. 1, &c.

Q. 50. *For what Reason did Christ Suffer all these Things?*

A. Not for any Sins of his own, for he was without Sin, Heb. iv. 15. But he suffered first as an Example to us, to teach us Patience (a); and secondly,

as a Sacrifice for the Redemption of Mankind from the Slavery and Punishment of Sin (b). (a) 1 Per. ii. 21, 22, 23. *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an Example that ye should follow his Steps; who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth Righteously.* (b) Rom. v. 8. &c. *While we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us: justified by his Blood: reconciled to God by the Death of his Son.* Mat. xx. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Eph. i. 7. Isa. liii. 10, 11.

Q 51. *But what need was there of any such Sacrifice or Redemption of Man to be made?*

A. Because all Mankind were involved in Sin, and unable to free themselves from the Guilt or Punishment of it. Rom. iii. 9, 10. *Jews and Gentiles, they are all under Sin; there is none Righteous, no not one.* Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. Gen. vi. 5.

Q 52. *How came all Mankind to be thus involved in Sin?*

A. By the Transgression of our first Parent *Adam*, whereby the Nature of all Mankind became corrupted and enslaved to Sin. Rom. v. 12. *By one Man Sin entered into the World, &c.* Chap. vii. 18. *In me (that is, in my Flesh) dwelleth no good Thing, &c.* Gen. ii. 16. Psal. li. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Q 53. *But could not God have freed Mankind from Sin, without sending Christ to suffer for them?*

A. What God could have done, it does not become us here to enquire, Deut. xxix. 29. it is enough that in his infinite Wisdom he has thought this to be the fittest Way, Rom xi. 33.

Q 54. *Are all Men then, without Exception, Redeemed from their Sins, by the Death of Christ?*

A. Yes, if they believe and obey the Gospel. Joh. i. 12. *As many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* Acts x. 34, 35. Heb. v. 9. 1 John ii. 2.

Q 55.

Q. 55. But what shall become of those Men who never had the Gospel preached to them; and therefore could not believe it, because they know it not?

A. We must leave such Men to God, and pass no Judgment upon them. 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.

Q. 56. But why was Christ Buried?

A. That it might the more plainly appear that he was really dead; and so the Miracle of his Resurrection be the more evident and unquestionable, Mat. xxvii. 62, &c.

Q. 57. Did Christ descend into Hell?

A. Yes, Psal. xvi. 10. Acts ii. 31. His Soul was not left in Hell.

Q. 58. What is the meaning of this Expression, and the Reason of his so Descending?

A. The Holy Scripture has not fully and plainly set forth this Matter; neither has the Christian Church declared the Sense of it; and therefore we need not curiously enquire into it.

Q. 59. Did Jesus continue in the Grave as other Men do?

A. No; for he soon rose again from the Dead, and came to Life, Acts i. 3. He shewed himself alive after his Passion, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them Forty Days. Mat. xxviii. 1, &c. Mark xvi. 1, &c. Luke xxiv. 1, &c. John xx. and xxi.

Q. 60. When did he rise from the Dead?

A. The Third Day after he was Crucified, John ii. 12, 21. Acts x. 40.

Q. 61. But how are we assured, that it was really the same Person who was Buried and rose again?

A. Because his Disciples saw him, eat and drank with him, touched him, and conversed with him for the Space of Forty Days, Acts x. 49, 41. John xx. 20, 27. Acts i. 3.

Q. 62. Did Christ remain always upon Earth after his Resurrection?

A. No

A. No ; for after Forty Days, *He ascended into Heaven*, Luke xxiv. 51. where he *sitteth at the Right Hand of God*, Mark xvi. 19.

Q. 63. *Has God Hands ?*

A. No ; for God is a Spirit (see *Q.* 33.) and a Spirit has no Bodily Members. Luke xxiv. 39. *A Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones*, Acts xvii. 19.

Q. 64. *What mean you then when you say, That Christ sitteth at the Right Hand of God ?*

A. I mean, that he is placed in a State of the greatest Glory, Honour, and Power that can be. Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. *Set him at his own Right Hand in the heavenly Places, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, &c.* John xvii. 5. Phil. ii. 9, 10.

Q. 65. *What does Christ do for us now that he is in Heaven ?*

A. He for ever makes *Intercession* with God for us. Heb. vii. 25, and ix. 24. 1 John ii. 1.

Q. 66. *What do you mean when you say that Christ shall judge the Quick and the Dead ?*

A. I mean, that all Men must appear before him, to give an Account of their Works ; and to receive Sentence from him accordingly, Rom. xiv. 10. *We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ*, 2 Cor. v. 10. Acts xvii. 31. and x. 42.

Q. 67. *What mean you by the Dead ?*

A. I mean such Persons as die, who are to be restored to Life again, at the Day of Judgment. (See *Q.* 87.)

Q. 68. *What mean you by the Quick ?*

A. I mean such Persons as shall be found alive at the Day of Judgment ; who shall not die at all, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*, &c. 1 Thes. iv. 15, 16, 17.

Q. 69. *When shall this Judgment be ?*

A. It shall be at a Time appointed by God ; but unknown to any Man, Acts xvii. 31. Matt. xxiv. 36.

Q. 70.

Q. 70. *What mean you by this Word GHOST?*

A. GHOST is only another Word for Spirit.

Q. 71. *Who is the HOLY GHOST?*

A. He is a distinct Person from the Father and the Son (a); proceeding and coming forth from them (b); and God (c), together with them (d).

(a) The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are spoken of in Holy Scriptures, in the very same Language as we always use in speaking of several Persons: Thus *John* xiv. 16, 17. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth.* See *Matt.* xxviii. 19. *2 Cor.* xiii. 14. And therefore we use the Word *Person*, as the properest Term that we can find to express the Distinction that is between them. (b) *John* xiv. 26. *The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name;* see *Chap.* xv. 26. and *Chap.* xvi. 7. *1 Per.* xi. comp. *2 Pet.* i. 21. (c) *1 Cor.* iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* *Acts* v. 3, 4. (d) Q. 38.

Q. 72. *Why is he so expressly called HOLY?*

A. Not that he is more HOLY than the Father or the Son; but because he is the immediate Author and Worker of Holiness in us; which is called Sanctifying, *Tit.* iii. 5. *The renewing of the Holy Ghost.* *Rom.* viii. 9, 13. *Gal.* iv. 6; and *Chap.* v. 22, 23.

Q. 73. *But how can Three Persons be One God?*

A. Such Things as these are above our Understanding: But yet we must believe it, because God has declared it in his Holy Word, *1 Cor.* xiii. 9. *We know in part, and we prophesy in part. & 12. We see through a Glass darkly.*

Q. 74. *What mean you by this Word CHURCH?*

A. I mean the Congregation of all Faithful Christians, together with their Children. *Acts* ii. 47. *The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.*

39. *The Promise is unto you, and to your Children.*
 1 Cor. i. 2, and Chap. vii. 14. Mark x. 14.

Q. 75. *How came there to be such a CHURCH, or Congregation?*

A. God called it through *Jesus Christ* by the Preaching of the Gospel. *Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Go, teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c. Rom. x. 14, 15.*

Q. 76. *Why do you call the Church Holy?*

A. Because the very End and Design of calling the Church, was the promoting of true Holiness. And whoso would be a true Member of the Church, must be Holy in his Life and Actions. *2 Tim. ii. 19. Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity. Tit. ii. 11, 12, 14.*

Q. 77. *What mean you by this Word Catholick?*

A. **Catholick** signifies no more but Universal.

Q. 78. *Why do you call the Church Universal, or Catholick?*

A. Because it is not confined to one Nation or People more than another: But all Men are indifferently called to embrace the Gospel, and come into the Church, *Matt. xxviii. 19. Go, and teach all Nations, Acts x. 35. Gal. iii. 28.*

Q. 79. *How long shall this Church continue upon Earth?*

A. As long as the World shall last, *Matt. xvi. 18. The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Chap. xxviii. 20.*

Q. 80. *What mean you by this Word Saints?*

A. I mean all good Christians. *1 Cor. i. 2. To the Saints and Faithful Brethren in Christ, Eph. i. 1.*

Q. 81. *What mean you by this Word Communion?*

A. I mean Partnership or the Participation of any Benefit in common.

Q. 82. *What mean you then by the Communion of Saints?*

A. I mean that all Faithful Christians whatsoever, do in common partake of the Privileges and Benefits of the Gospel. *Eph. iii. 6. That the Gentiles should be Fellow Heirs of the same Body, and Partakers of his Promise in Christ. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Rom. ii. 19. 11.*

Q 83. What mean you by the Forgiveness of Sins?

A. I mean Pardon and Deliverance from the Guilt and Punishment due to them.

Q 84. On what Account does God pardon our Sins?

A. Not for any Merit or Desert of our own; but for the sake of *Jesus Christ*, who suffered for us. *Tit. iii. 5. Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us. Luke xvii. 10. (Q. 50.)*

Q 85. But is there not something to be performed on our Part, in order to obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins?

A. Yes, we must believe the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, and repent of our Sins. *Mark i. 15. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel. Acts x. 43. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts iii. 19.*

Q 86. What is Repentance?

A. Repentance is a thorough Reformation, and Amendment of Life. *Isaiah i. 16, 17. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. Ezek. xviii. 27. Matt. iii. 8. Tit. ii. 12.*

Q 87. What mean you by the Resurrection of the Body?

A. I mean, that at the Day of Judgment, the Bodies of all Men who have died, shall be raised again, and joined to their Souls as formerly. *Acts xxiv. 15. There shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the just and unjust. 1 Cor. xv. 12, &c. John v. 28, 29.*

Q 88. But how can this be?

A. By the Almighty Power of God. *1 Cor. vi. 14. God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own Power. Gen. xviii. 14. Mat. xx. 28.*

Q 89.

Q. 89. But will our Bodies then be such as now they are?

A. No; but very much altered and changed. 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44. *It is sown in Corruption, it is raised in Incorruption: It is sown in Dishonour, it is raised in Glory: It is sown in Weakness, it is raised in Power: It is sown a Natural Body, it is raised a Spiritual Body.* Mat. xxii. 30.

Q. 90. What mean you by the Life everlasting?

A. I mean, that after the Resurrection, none of Mankind shall ever die any more; but the Righteous shall live in everlasting Happiness, and the Wicked in eternal Misery, John v. 28, 29. *All that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.* 1 Cor. xv. 55. Mat. xxv. 46.

Q. 91. Why do you say Amen at the End of your Creed?

A. Amen signifies no more but *Yes verily*. And I pronounce it at the End of my Creed, in token that I give my full Assent and Belief to it.

Q. 92. You said that your Godfathers and Godmothers did promise for you, that you should keep God's Commandments: tell me how many there be?

A. Ten. Deut. iv. 13.

Q. 93. Which be they?

A. The same which God spake in the Twentieth Chapter of Exodus, saying, &c.

Q. 94. But these Commandments were then given only to the People of Israel; and how can that lay any Obligation upon us to keep them?

A. We are obliged to keep them, partly because they are so agreeable to our very Reason, Rom. ii. 14, 15. and more fully, because they are confirmed

by our Saviour *Jesus Christ* in his Gospel, *Mat. xix. 17, 18, 19. If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments. Phil. iv. 8.*

Q 95. But do these Commandments contain the whole Duty of every Christian?

A. All the Duties of every Christian are contained in them, or may be deduced from them. *Mat. xxii. 40. On these Two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

Q 96. What Rules are to be observed in the Interpretation of these Commands?

A. Chiefly Three.

Q 97. What is the First Rule?

A. That when any Thing is forbidden, we must suppose the contrary thereunto to be commanded; and when any Thing is commanded, we must suppose the contrary thereunto to be forbidden. *Exod. xx. 3. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Mat. xxii. 37, 38. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. This is the first and great Commandment, Exod. xx. 13. Rom. xii. 20. Exod. xx. 12. Mat. xv. 4.*

Q 98. What is the Second Rule?

A. That every Thing which is a necessary Help towards keeping any of the Commandments, is to be looked upon as commanded; and every Thing which tempts us to the breaking of any Commandment, is to be looked upon as forbidden, *Exod. xx. 15. Thou shalt not steal. Eph. iv. 28. Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, &c. Exod. xx. 14. Mat. v. 28. Col. iii. 5. Ex. xx. 7. Mat. vi. 34, 37.*

Q 99. What is the Third Rule?

A. That we must do or forbear any Thing, according as it may by clear and evident Reason be made appear to follow as a plain Consequence from any of the Commandments, *Luke xii. 57. Yea, and why even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right? Phil. iv. 8.*

Q 100. Which is the first Commandment?

A. I am

A. I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage. Thou shalt have none other Gods but me.

Q. 101. What is required from us by this Commandment?

A. We are hereby required to have God for our God.

Q. 102. What is it to have God for our God?

A. It is to acknowledge and own him, not only in Words, but also in Deeds; that is to say, by carefully performing all those Duties, which we owe unto him as our Lord and God. Luke vi. 46. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which I say?* Mal. i. 6. Jam. ii. 14, &c.

Q. 103. What are those Duties which we owe unto God?

A. They are chiefly these: First, **to believe in him** (a). Secondly, **to fear him** (b). Thirdly, **to love him** (c). Fourthly, **to worship him** (d) with Prayer (e), and Thanksgiving (f). Fifthly, **to put our whole trust in him** (g). And lastly, **to serve him truly**, by keeping his Commandments all the Days of our Life (h). (a) Heb. xi. 6. *Without Faith it is impossible to please him: For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* John i. 12. and vii. 29. 1 John iii. 23. (b) Heb. xii. 28. *Serve God acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear.* Isa. viii. 13. Luke xii. 5. (c) Mat. xxii. 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.* 1 John iv. 19. and v. 3. (d) Mat. iv. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Psal. xxix. 2. (e) Mat. vi. 9. *After this manner pray ye, Our Father, &c.* Psal. v. ii. (f) Psal. l. 14. *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.* Eph. v. 20. (g) Psal. iv. 5. *Put your Trust in the Lord;*
and

and 62. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 17. (b) Mat. xix. 17. *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* 1 Joh. v. 3. Luke i. 74, 75. Ezek. xviii. 24.

Q. 104. What is forbidden by this Commandment?

A. We are hereby forbidden to have any other God besides the true God.

Q. 105. What is it to have another God besides the true God?

A. Not only to worship a false God, but even to pay any of those Duties, which we owe unto God, to any Thing, or any Person besides himself, is in Effect to put another Thing in the Place of God, and so in some degree to have another God.

Q. 106. Can you express this more plainly?

A. Yes: To believe in, fear, or love any Person or Thing, as much or more than God; to worship it with the same, or like Worship, or to put my Trust in, or give Obedience to it, sooner than to God, would be in some Degree a withdrawing from God, and a setting up that same Thing or Person in his Place. *Mat. iv. 10. Him only shalt thou serve. Mat. xxii. 37. Luke xii. 4, 5. Col. i. 5. Phil. iii. 19. Rom. xvi. 18.*

Q. 107. But we were never in Bondage in the Land of Egypt: And therefore of what Use can it be to make mention of this to us?

A. The Bondage of the People of Israel in the Land of Egypt, is a Type of a worse Bondage, which by Nature we are under; that is to say, to Sin. (See *Q. 51. and 52.*) From which since God is pleased to deliver us by *Jesus Christ* (see *Q. 50.*) we ought to Love, Honour, and Adore him, and to have him for our God.

Q. 108. Which is the second Commandment?

A. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven Image, nor the Likeness of any Thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth. Thou shalt

thalt not bow down to them nor worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a Jealous God, and visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the Third and Fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shew Mercy unto Thousands in them that love me, and keep my Commandments.

Q 109. *Is it utterly unlawful upon any Account to make any Picture or Image?*

A. Pictures or Images for Ornament, or Civil Use, are not unlawful to be made or had. *Exod. xxv. 18. &c. 1 Kings vii. 25. Matt. xxii. 20.*

Q 110 *What then is chiefly forbidden in this Commandment?*

A. First, it is utterly forbidden so much as to make any visible Picture or Image to represent God, because this would be grossly to misrepresent him (a). And Secondly, It is forbidden to worship or bow down to any Image whatsoever (b). (a) *Deut. iv. 15, 16. Take good heed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of Similitude) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven Image, &c. Acts xvii. 29. Rom. i 22, 23. (b) Lev. xxvi. 1. Neither shall ye set up any Image of Stone in your Land, to bow down unto it. Deut. xvi. 22. and xxvii. 15.*

Q 111. *Is it lawful to make any Pictures or Images of Jesus Christ, or his Apostles, or other Saints?*

A. I will not say, that it is utterly unlawful to make them; but great Care ought to be taken to restrain all People from giving any Sort of Worship to them; because God is a Jealous God.

Q 112. *Will God punish the Children with Eternal Damnation for the Sins of their Parents?*

A. No, he will not. *Gal. vi. 5. Every Man shall bear his own Burden. 1 Cor. iii. 8. Ezek. xviii. 20. Rom. ii. 6. &c.*

Q 113. *How then does God visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children?*

Q. 121. *What mean you by a Sabbath Day?*

A. **Sabbath Day** signifies a Day of Rest.

Q. 122. *What is it to keep a Day Holy?*

A. To **keep a Day Holy**, is to set it apart from other Business, for the Worship and Service of God. *Isa. lviii. 13. If thou turn away thy Foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy Pleasure on my Holy Day, and call the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own Ways, nor finding thine own Pleasure, nor speaking thine own Words.*

Q. 123. *The Jewish Sabbath was upon the Seventh Day of the Week, which we call Saturday: And are we obliged to keep that Day holy?*

A. No: For the Jewish Sabbath, as well as the rest of the Ceremonies of that Law, was abrogated by Jesus Christ. *Col. ii. 16, 17. The Sabbath Days, which are a Shadow of Things to come.*

Q. 124. *Are we then obliged to keep any Day at all Holy unto God?*

A. Yes certainly: For since we are no less obliged to Almighty God for his Goodness to us, than the People of Israel were; we in Return ought sure to spend as many of our Days in God's Service, as they did of theirs: That is to say, at least one Day in seven, as they did. See *Matt. v. 20. Except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Q. 125. *But which of the Seven Days ought we to keep HOLY?*

A. We ought to keep HOLY the First Day of the Week; upon which our Saviour rose from the Dead for our Justification (*Rom. iv. 25.*) *Matt. xxviii. 1. &c.* Which Day was accordingly kept by the Apostles themselves (a), and is therefore called *the Lord's Day*, *Rev. i. 20.* (a) *Acts xx. 7. Upon the First Day of*

the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached to them. John xx. 19, 26.

Q. 126. *How ought we to spend and employ the Lord's Day?*

A. Chiefly in the Worship and Service of God (b), and in the Works of Christian Charity (c). (b) Ibid. (c) 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. *Now concerning the Collection for the Saints: Upon the First Day of the Week, let every one of you lay by him in Store. Jam. i. 27. Isa. lviii. 13.*

Q. 122.

Q. 127. *Is it not lawful to do any sort of Work upon the Lord's Day?*

A. Works of Charity, or Works of Necessity may be done upon the Lord's Day. Luke xiii. 15, 16. *Doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his Ox or his Ass from the Stall, and lead him away to Watering? And ought not this Woman, being a Daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen Years, be loosed from this Bond on the Sabbath Day? Matt. xii. 10, 11, 12.*

Q. 128. *Are any other Days besides the Lord's Day to be kept Holy?*

A. Some part of each Day ought to be spent in the Worship and Service of God (a), and in good Works, as Opportunity shall offer (b). And besides all this, a due and decent Regard is to be had to all such Days, as are set apart for Religious Offices, by lawful Authority, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil (c). (a) Psal. cxlv. 2. *Every Day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever.* And cxix. 164. (b) Gal. vi. 10. *As we have Opportunity, let us do good unto all Men.* (c) Heb. xiii. 17. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves.* See John x. 22. 1 Mac. iv. 59.

Q. 129. *Is it lawful to use any sort of innocent Recreation or Diversion on the Lord's Day?*

A. The Design of this Commandment being partly for the Rest and Refreshment of Man and Beast, after

the Toil and Labour of the Week (a); whatsoever may innocently contribute thereunto, may lawfully be done or used (b); provided it be no Hindrance to the publick or private Service of God, nor gives any just Scandal to others. (a) Exod. xxiii. 12. *Six Days thou shalt do thy Work, and on the Seventh Day thou shalt rest; that thine Ox and thy Ass, and the Son of thine Handmaid, and the Stranger may be refreshed.* Deut. v. 14. (b) Mark ii. 27. *The Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.*

Q. 130. *Which is the Fifth Commandment?*

A. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

Q. 131. *What is the direct and literal Meaning of this Commandment?*

A. That Children should Love, Obey, Honour, and Succour their Parents. Mal. i. 6. Eph. vi. 1, 2. 1 Tim. v. 4. Mark vii. 10, 11, 12, 13.

Q. 132. *Is the Sense of this Commandment to be extended any further?*

A. Yes: For as far as any one stands in the Place of a Parent to me, it is fit that I should return him a due Proportion of Love, Honour, and Duty.

For Example: The King, and every lawful Magistrate is as a Father to all those People, whom they govern and protect, (Isa. xlix. 23. Gen. xlv. 8.) and therefore we are bound to Honour and Obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him (a). Spiritual Pastors and Teachers are as Fathers to those, whom they guide and bring up in the way of Godliness, (2 Kings ii. 12. 1 Cor. iv. 15.) therefore we ought to submit ourselves to them, following those good Directions which they give us (b). Governors and Masters are as Fathers to their Families, and those whom they take care of, and provide for (2 Kings v. 13.) and therefore may justly claim a Submission from them (c). And Lastly, Elderly Persons are as Parents

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to those that are Young, to whom they ought to give Counsel and Advice, *Acts* vii. 2. and therefore, there is a particular Respect to be paid to those that are Aged (*d*). (*a*) *1 Pet.* ii. 13, 14. *Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's Sake; whether it be to the King, as Supreme; or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him, &c.* *Rom.* xiii. 1, &c. *Tit.* iii. 1. (*b*) *Heb.* iii. 17. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your Souls.* *1 Tim.* v. 17. (*c*) *Tit.* ii. 9. *Exhort Servants to be obedient to their own Masters, and please them well in all Things, &c.* *Eph.* vi. 5, 6. (*d*) *Lev.* xix. 32. *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary Head, and honour the Face of the Old Man.* *1 Tim.* v. 1, 2. *1 Pet.* v. 5.

Q 133. But suppose any of these your Superiors should require any thing from you which is Sinful, and contrary to God's Law?

A. We ought to obey God rather than Men, *Acts* v. 29. and chap. iv. 19.

Q 134. May not the Duty of Superiors towards their Inferiors be also reduced under this Commandment?

A. I suppose it may: For since God requires that Inferiors should be respectful and dutiful to their Superiors; it is not to be doubted, but that he also requires Superiors to be just and kind to their Inferiors. *Eph.* vi. 4. *1 Pet.* ii. 14. and v. 1, 2, 3. *Eph.* vi. 9.

Q 135. But supposing that Superiors do not perform their Duty as they ought, does that discharge their Inferiors from the Obligation of their respective Duties?

A. Not at all; as long as the Relation, which is the Foundation of the Duty, continues undissolved. *1 Pet.* ii. 18. *Servants, be subject to your Masters with all Fear; not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward.*

Q 136. Which is the Sixth Commandment?

A. *Thou shalt do no Murder.*

Q. 137. What is Murder?

A. **MURDER** is the wilful taking away the Life of a Man, without lawful Authority, or just Cause. *Exod. xxi. 12, 13, 14. Num. xxxv. 16, &c.*

Q. 138. By what Authority may the Life of a Man be taken away?

A. By the Authority of the Civil Magistrate, provided that there is a lawful Cause for it.

For Example: Malefactors may be put to Death, according to the just Laws of the Land, for a Terror to others, and the necessary Preservation of Mens Lives and Fortunes (a); and publick Enemies may be destroy'd by the Sword of War, for the necessary Safety and Security of the State (b). (a) *Rom. xiii. 4. If thou do that which is Evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the Sword in vain; for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil. Gen. ix. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 14.* (b) *Psal. cxliv. 1. Blessed be the Lord my Strength, which teacheth my Hands to war, and my Fingers to fight. Numb. x. 9. Luke iii. 14. Acts x. 1, &c.*

Q. 139. But is it lawful for a private Man in his own Defence, to kill another that unlawfully assaults him?

A. Yes, if he has no other possible way to save himself: For not only the Law of Nature, but that of the Land also does allow it: And he that fights in his own just and necessary Defence, acts by the Authority of the Law, as much as a Magistrate in punishing a Malefactor, or a Soldier in taking up Arms against the Enemies of his Country.

Q. 140. Is it lawful for a Man to kill himself?

A. For a Man to kill himself, is as much **MURDER**, and therefore as unlawful, as to kill another Man. *Job xiv. 14. All the Days of my appointed Time will I wait till my Change come. Heb. xii. 1. Let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us.*

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Q. 141. *Is any Thing else forbidden by this Commandment, besides downright MURDER?*

A. Yes; every Thing that leads or tends to the Sin of MURDER, is also forbidden by this Commandment. Such as are all causeless, or over violent Anger (a), all Hatred and Malice (b), and all manner of Revenge (c). (a) *Mat. v. 22. Whosoever is angry with his Brother without a Cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment: And whosoever shall say to his Brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the Council: But whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell Fire.* Eph. iv. 26. (b) *1 John iii. 15. Whosoever hateth his Brother, is a Murderer.* Eph. iv. 31. (c) *Rom. xii. 19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto Wrath: For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.* Mat. v. 38, &c.

Q. 142. *Does this Commandment require any thing more from us?*

A. Yes: It requires that we should always do our honest Endeavour to preserve, not only our own Lives (*Eph. v. 29.*) but also the Lives of all other Men. *Rom. xii. 20. If thine Enemy hunger, feed him: If he thirst, give him Drink.* Chap. xiii. 8, &c. *Mat. xxv. 35, &c.*

Q. 143. *What is the Seventh Commandment?*

A. **Thou shalt not commit Adultery.**

Q. 144. *What is forbidden by this Commandment?*

A. All manner of Lewdness or Unchastity is hereby forbidden, not only to Persons that are married, but also to those that are Unmarried (a); as also every thing that leads or tends to Lewdness or Unchastity; all wanton Thoughts and Desires (b), and all manner of wanton or obscene Discourse (c). (a) *Eph. v. 5: No Whoremonger, nor unclean Person, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God.* (b) *Mat. v. 28. Whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.*

Job xxxi. 1. (c) Eph. v. 3. *Fornication and all Uncleannefs, let it not once be named among ft you. Neither Filthinefs, nor foolish Talking, or Fefting.* Chap. iv. 29.

Q 145. *What is farther required from us by this Commandment ?*

A. This Commandment requires from us all manner of Chafity and Purity, both in our Actions, and alfo in our Thoughts; and alfo every thing that is neceffary towards the fubduing of our Lufts, and the keeping us Chafte and Pure. Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your Members which are upon the Earth; Fornication, Uncleannefs, Inordinate Affection, evil Concupifcence.* 1 Thef. iv. 3, 4, 5. 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Q 146. *Which is the Eighth Commandment ?*

A. **Thou fhalt not Steal.**

Q 147. *What is forbidden by this Commandment ?*

A. We are hereby forbidden either unlawfully to take, or wrongfully to detain from another that which is, or ought to be his.

Q 148. *How many ways are there of unlawfully taking away that which is anothers ?*

A. Chiefly Three: Firft, Robbing or Theft (a). Secondly, Fraud or Cheating (b). And Thirdly, Oppreffing, or rigoroufly exacting the utmoft that the Law will allow; although beyond the Rules of Reason and Equity (c). (a) Eph. iv. 28. *Let him that stole, steal no more.* Prov. xxix. 24. (b) 1 Thef. iv. 6. *That no Man go beyond and defraud his Brother in any Matter.* Prov. xx. 14. (c) Eph. iv. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.* Col. iii. 13. 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

Q 149. *What is farther required from us by this Commandment ?*

A. This Commandment requires from us, Firft, That we fhould endeavour honeftly to get our own Living, that fo we may not be tempted to cheat or steal (a). Secondly, That we fhould render to every Man whatfoever is due to him (b). Thirdly, that we

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should restore to every Man such Things as we find to have been lost, or strayed away from him (c). And Lastly, since by the Law of God, Alms are due to the Poor, according to the Substance that God has bless'd us with; this Commandment does certainly require, that we should give Alms accordingly (d). (a) Eph. iv. 28. *Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour.* 1 Thes. iv. 11, 12. (b) Rom. xiii. 7, 8. *Render to all their Dues, owe no Man any Thing.* (c) Exod. xxiii. 4. *If thou meet thine Enemy's Ox or his Ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.* Deut. xxii. 1, 2. (d) 1 John iii. 17. *Whoso hath this World's Good, and seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* Mat. xxv. 45. Luke iii. 11. Heb. xiii. 16.

Q 150. *Which is the Ninth Commandment?*

A. **Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.**

Q 151. *What is it to bear false Witness against a Man?*

A. It is to speak that which is false, to his Damage or Prejudice.

Q 152. *Who is your Neighbour?*

A. Every Man and Woman whatsoever. Luke x. 29, &c.

Q 153. *What then is forbidden by this Commandment?*

A. This Commandment forbids us, First, to give or procure any Testimony, or to raise or spread any Report which is false; and whereby any other Person is like to be damnified or prejudiced (a). Secondly, or to spread any unkind or uncharitable Report of another, although it should be true (b); for he who allows himself to speak uncharitably of another, will easily be tempted to speak falsely of him also. Thirdly, all manner of Lying is hereby forbidden (c); for Lying will easily lead a Man to false Witnessing; and there is no Lie but may prove hurtful

to others. And lastly, all deceitful equivocating Speeches. (d); which are as bad as Lying to all Intent and Purposes. (a) Exod xxiii. 1, 2. *Thou shalt not raise a false Report. Put not thine Hand with the Wicked, to be an unrighteous Witness, &c.* Prov. x. 18. and chap. xix. 9. (b). Tit. iii. 2. *Speak Evil of no Man.* Psal. xv. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. (d) Col. iii. 9. *Lie not one to another.* John viii. 44. Rev. xxi. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 10. *Let him refrain his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips that they speak no Guile: and* chap. ii. 1, 22.

Q. 154. *What is farther required by this Commandment?*

A. This Commandment requires Truth and Sincerity from us in all our Conversation, and Dealing with others, as being contrary to false Witnessing, Lying, and Deceit. Eph. iv. 25. *Putting away Lying, speak every Man Truth with his Neighbour.* Psal. xv. 2. Zech. viii. 16. Isa. xxxiii. 15.

Q. 155. *Which is the Tenth Commandment?*

A. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Servant, nor his Maid, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing that is his.*

Q. 156. *What is it to Covet?*

A. To Covet is unlawfully to desire that which is anothers.

Q. 157. *When is the Desire of that which is anothers, unlawful?*

A. It is unlawful to desire that which is anothers First, if the Thing desired cannot lawfully be had (a). Secondly, or if reasonable Compensation be not made to the Owner (b). Or, Thirdly, if the Desire be so vehement, as to disturb a Man, and make him discontented (c). (a) Mat. xiv. 4. *It is not lawful for thee to have her, i. e. his Brother Philip's Wife.* y 3 Col. iii. 5. (b) Jer. xxii. 13. *Wo unto him that useth*

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(c) Heb. xiii. 5. Let your Conversation be without
Covetousness, and be content with such Things as ye
have. 1 Kings xxi. 4.*

*Q. 158. What is farther required by this Com-
mandment?*

*A. That we should be content with our Condition,
whatsoever it is. Phil. iv. 11. I have learned in what-
soever State I am, therewith to be content, &c. 1 Tim.
vi. 8. Heb. xiii. 5. Job i. 21.*

*Q. 159. Is it not then lawful for a Man to desire
or endeavour to make his Condition better in this
World?*

*A. It is both lawful, and in many Cases our Duty.
1 Thes. iv. 11, 12. Do your own Business, and work
with your Hands, that ye may have lack of nothing.
Eph. iv. 21.*

*Q. 160. Wherein then does the Nature of true Com-
mitment consist?*

*A. In submitting quietly to the Will and Provi-
dence of God, even when we miss of obtaining those
Things which we desire and seek after. Job i. 21.
The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: Bless-
ed be the Name of the Lord. Mat. xxvi. 39. and chap.
vi. 10. Acts xxi. 14. 1 Sam. iii. 18.*

*Q. 161. Well then! Now tell me in short, and in
few Words: What dost thou chiefly learn by
these Commandments?*

*A. I learn two things; my Duty towards
God, and my Duty towards my Neighbour.*

Q. 162. What is thy Duty towards God?

*A. My Duty towards God, is to believe
in him, to fear him, and to love him with all
my Heart, with all my Mind, with all my
Soul, and with all my Strength; to worship
him, to give him thanks, to put my whole
trust*

trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and his Word; and to serve him truly all the days of my Life.

Q. 163. What is thy Duty towards thy Neighbour?

A. My Duty towards my Neighbour, is to love him as myself (Mat. xxii. 39.) and to do to all Men, as I would they should do unto me; (Mat. vii. 12.) to love, honour, and succour my Father and Mother; to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him. To submit myself to all my Governors, Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters. To order myself lowly and reverently to all my Betters. To hurt no body by Word or Deed. To be true and just in all my Dealings. To bear no Malice nor Hatred in my Heart. To keep my Hands from Picking and Stealing; my Tongue from Evil-speaking, Lying, and Slandering. To keep my Body in Temperance, Sobriety, and Chastity. Not to covet nor desire other Mens Goods; but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my Duty in that State of Life, unto which it shall please God to call me.

Q. 164. Are we able of ourselves to keep the Commandments of God?

A. Not without his Grace and Assistance. Phil. ii. 13. It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure. John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. and chap. iv. 13.

Q. 165. How is this Grace and Assistance to be obtained?

A. We must pray to God for it. Luke xi. 9. Ask, and it shall be given you. y. 13. Much more shall

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our Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Jam. i. 5.

Q. 166. How must we pray?

A. As our Lord Jesus Christ hath taught us, Matt. vi. 9. After this Manner pray ye. Luke. xi. 2.

Q. 167. My good Child, then, since thou dost know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special Grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent Prayer: Let me hear therefore if thou canst say the Lords Prayer.

A. Our Father which art in Heaven: Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. Amen.

Q. 168. What desirest thou of God in this Prayer?

A. I desire my Lord God our Heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness, to send his Grace unto me and to all People; that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him as we ought to do. And I pray unto God, that he will send us all things that be needful both for our Souls and Bodies: And that he will be Merciful unto us, and forgive us our Sins: And that it will please him to save and defend us in all Dangers ghostly and bodily; and that he will keep us from all Sin and Wickedness, and from our ghostly Enemy,

Enemy, and from everlasting Death. And this I trust he will do of his Mercy and Goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore I say, Amen. So be it.

Q. 169. But let me examine thee more particularly: And first, Why are we taught here to call upon God by the Name of Father?

A. Because the Remembrance that God is our **Dur Father**, gives us the more Confidence and Assurance that he will accept of our Prayers, and grant our Requests. (See Q. 8.)

Q. 170. But why are we taught to say **Dur Father**, give us our daily Bread, forgive us our Trespases, &c. And not rather **My Father**, give me my daily Bread, Forgive me, &c.

A. Because it is our Duty to pray, not only for ourselves, but for others. 1 Tim. ii. 1. That Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving Thanks be made for all Men. Jam. v. 16.

Q. 171. But since God is every where (Q. 33.) why do we say, **which art in Heaven**?

A. To put us in Mind of the Majesty of God, which appears most greatly and gloriously in **HEAVEN** (a); and also of his Power and Goodness, beyond that of our Earthly Parents (b). (a) Isai. lxvi. 1. *Heaven is my Throne.* Ecclef. v. 2. (b) Mat. vii. 11. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good Things to them that ask him.*

Q. 172. What mean you by this Expression **Hallowed be thy Name**?

A. It is herein my Meaning and my Prayer, that God may always be honoured and glorified, and his Name sanctified, both by myself, and all other Men, 1 Pet. iv. 11. *That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be Praise and Dominion,*

for

for ever and ever. Psal. lvii. 5. 1 Cor. x. 31. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

Q. 173. *What mean you by the Kingdom of God?*

A. I mean the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Design of which is to make all Men obedient to God as their Lord and King. *Mat. iii. 2. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Chap. iv. 23.*

Q. 174. *What mean you, then, when you pray that God's Kingdom may come?*

A. I mean that the Gospel may be spread over all the World; and that all Men may become obedient to it. *2 Thess. iii. 1. Pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free Course and be glorified. Col. iv. 3, 4.*

Q. 175. *What mean you when you say, Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven?*

A. I pray, that as the Holy Angels in Heaven are in all Things most exactly obedient to the Will of God (a), so we upon Earth may all of us in every thing become entirely submissive to his Will and Pleasure; both by readily doing what he commands (b), and patiently suffering whatever he in his Providence shall think fit to lay upon us (c). (a) *Psal. ciii. 20. His Angels that do his Commandments, hearkning unto the Voice of his Word.* (b) *Psal. cxliii. 10. Teach me to do thy Will; for thou art my God; and chap. xxv. 4, 5.* (c) *Mat. xxvi. 39. Not as I will, but as thou wilt. Acts xxi. 14.*

Q. 176. *What mean you when you say, Give us this Day our daily Bread?*

A. I pray, that God would give us such Things, as are necessary for the sustaining our Lives, (a), of which Bread is reckoned to be the chief Support (b). (a) *Prov. xxx. 8. Feed me with Food convenient for me.* (b) *Ezek. iv. 16. The Staff of Bread.*

Q. 177. But suppose a Man is already provided of such necessary Things for many Days, why must he yet pray every Day for **daily Bread**?

A. Because it is every Moment in God's Power to deprive us of Things which are even in our Possession (a); and we must pray for others, who want the Necessaries of Life, although we ourselves are supplied with them (b). (a) Ezek. xiv. 13. *When the Land sinneth against me, then will I stretch out mine Hand upon it, and will break the Staff of the Bread thereof, and will send Famine upon it.*

(b) **Q. 170.**

Q. 178. What mean you when you say, **Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us**?

A. I pray, that as we forgive all other Men who have wronged us, so God would forgive us our Sins, whereby we have offended him.

Q. 179. How far are we obliged to forgive those who have wronged us?

A. So far as not to do any thing by way of Revenge against them (a), but readily to do them good, if it be in our Power (b). (a) **Q. 141.** (b) Mar. v. 44. *Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* Rom. xii. 20, 21.

Q. 180. But may not Malefactors be prosecuted and brought to Punishment?

A. Yes (a); but this ought to be done out of Love to the Publick Good (b), and not out of any private Malice or Revenge. (a) **Q. 138.** (b) Gal. vi. 10. *As we have Opportunity, let us do good unto all Men.*

Q. 181. But what if a Man does not forgive those that trespass against him?

A. Then God will not forgive him his Trespases. Mat. vi. 14. 15. *If ye forgive Men their Trespases,*

your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.

Q. 182. *What mean you when you say, Lead us not into Temptation?*

A. I pray, that God in the Course of his Providence would so order Matters, as that we may not be brought into the way of Temptation; for fear, through human Frailty, we should fall into Sin.

Q. 183. *But since it pleases God sometimes to suffer us to be tempted, what must we do in order to escape the Danger?*

A. We must pray to God **to deliver us from Evil.**

Q. 184. *From what Evil do we here pray to God to Deliver us?*

A. From all manner of **Evil** whatsoever; but chiefly from the **Evil** of Sin, and the Consequence of it, everlasting Damnation.

Q. 185. *Mat. vi. 13. We have these Words added to the Lord's Prayer; For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. What is the Intent and Design of these Expressions?*

A. The Design of these Words is to praise and glorify God for the Greatness of his Power and Majesty. **Q. 172.** Rom. xvi. 27. Heb. xiii. 21.

Q. 186. *Why do you say Amen at the End of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. **Amen** signifies **yes verily**, or **so be it**: And I pronounce it at the End of my Prayers, in token that my Heart agrees with my Mouth.

Q. 187. *Is the Lord's Prayer to be used as a Prayer, or only as a Pattern to frame our Prayers by?*

A. It is to be used both Ways. **Luke xi. 2.** When ye pray, say, **Our Father, &c.** **Mat. vi. 9.**

After this manner pray ye, Our Father, &c.

Q. 188. *What Rules of Direction may we gather from the Lord's Prayer, for the better framing of our other Prayers?*

A. First, We learn from hence not to add our Prayers to Saints or Angels; but only to **our Father** who is in **Heaven**. Phil. iv. 6. *In every Thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving let your Requests be made known unto God.* Mat. iv. 10.

Secondly, We learn not to use a Multitude of unnecessary Words, or vain Repetitions, when we pray. Mat. vi. 7. *When ye pray, use not vain Repetitions &c.* Eccles. v. 2.

Thirdly, We learn what must always be the Matter and Substance of our Prayers, namely, to praise and glorify God (Q. 172. and 185.) to confess our Sins, and pray for Pardon (Q. 178. 1 John i. 8,) to pray for all Things necessary for our Souls (Q. 175.) and for our Bodies (Q. 176.) but always with an entire Submission to God's Will (Q. 175.) and lastly, to pray for others as well as ourselves (Q. 170.)

Q. 189. *How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?*

A. Two only, as generally necessary to Salvation; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Q. 190. *Why dost thou add those Words, as generally necessary to Salvation?*

A. The better to distinguish them from those other Things, which some Men call Sacraments; which are not necessary to Salvation.

Q. 191. *Are Baptism then and the Supper of the Lord necessary to Salvation?*

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necessary (a), as being ordained and commanded by God (b). (a) John iii. 5. *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* 2, &c. 1 Cor. x. 16. *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* John vi. 53, 54.

(b) 2. 195 2. 204, &c.

Q. 192. *But what does the Church mean, and, What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?*

A. I mean (as the Church also means) an outward and visible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a Means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof.

Q. 193. *How many Parts are there in a Sacrament?*

A. Two; the outward visible Sign, and the inward spiritual Grace.

Q. 194. *What is the outward visible Sign or Form in Baptism?*

A. Water, wherein the Person is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. 195. *Is this outward Form and manner of Baptizing ordained by Christ himself?*

A. Yes. Mat. xxviii. 19, *Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Acts ii. 48. and chap. 47, 48.

Q. 196. *What is the meaning of being Baptized in the Name of any Person?*

A. It is thereby to be dedicated, consecrated, and given up to an entire Belief in, and Obedience to that Person, in whose Name a Man is baptized.

1 Cor. i. 13. *Were ye baptized in the Name of Paul?*

Q. 197. *But does not the Word Baptize necessarily betoken the dipping the Person baptized under Water?*

A To Baptize signifies to wet or wash with Water (*Mark vii. 4.*) which may be done by dipping, or else by pouring or sprinkling the Water.

Q. 198. *What is the inward or spiritual Grace in Baptism?*

A. A Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness; for being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath, we are hereby made the Children of Grace.

Q. 199. *Explain this Answer more distinctly?*

A. Whereas by our corrupted Nature we are born in Sin, and perpetually addicted thereto; and thereby liable to the Wrath of God (*Q. 51, 52.*) by being baptized into the Church of Christ, we are as if we were born again, *John iii. 5.* and made the Children of God through his Grace (*Q. 7.*) and enabled to die unto Sin, that is, to mortify Sin in ourselves, and to live unto Righteousness, that is, to lead Holy Lives (*Q. 5.*)

Q. 200. *What is required of Persons to be baptized?*

A. Repentance (a) whereby they forsake Sin (b); and Faith (c) whereby they stedfastly believe the Gospel of Christ, and particularly the Promises of God made to them in that Sacrament (d). (a) *Acts ii. 38. Repent and be baptized.* (b) *Q. 86.* (c) *Acts viii. 37. If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayst be baptized.* (d) *Q. 23 &c.*

Q. 201. *Why then are Infants baptized when by reason of their tender Age they cannot*

not perform them, i. e. the Things which are required?

A. Because they promise them both (that is to say, both Repentance and Faith) by their Sureties (a), which Promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform (b).

(a) Q. 13. (b) Q. 28.

Q. 202. But ought Infants at all to be baptized?

A. Yes, if they are born of believing Parents; or are under the Care and Management of such Persons as are Christians?

Q. 203. What Proof have you for this?

A. Before the Coming of Christ, such Infants as these were to be admitted into God's Church, and taken into Covenant with him (a); nor is the Privilege of Infants any less now, than it was before Christ came into the World (b). (a) Gen. xvii. 12. He that is eight Days old, shall be circumcised. 13. And my Covenant shall be in your Flesh for an everlasting Covenant. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. (b) Mat. x. 14. Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not: For of such is the Kingdom of God.

Q. 204. Why was the Sacrament of the Lords Supper ordained?

A. For the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice (Q. 50.) of the Death of Christ, and of the Benefits which we receive thereby. Luke xxii. 19. This do in Remembrance of me. 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26.

Q. 205. Why is it called the Lord's Supper?

A. Because it was first ordained and practised by our Lord at the Time of Supper. Mat. xxvi. 26. 1 Cor. xi. 20.

Q. 206. What is the outward Part or Sign of the Lord's Supper?

A. Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded

commanded, both, to be received. 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup. See y 23, &c. Mark xiv. 22, &c.*

Q 207. What is the inward Part of Things signified?

A. The Body and Blood of Christ (a), which are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper (b). (a) Mat. xxvi. 26. *This is my Body: y 28. This is my Blood.* 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. (b) 1 Cor. x. 16. *The Cup, the Communion of the Blood of Christ? the Bread, the Communion of the Body of Christ?*

Q 208. Is not Christ in Heaven?

A. Yes. Q 62. Acts iii. 21.

Q 209. How can then his Body and Blood be verily and indeed taken and received by us here upon Earth?

A. As a Man verily and indeed takes and receives an Estate, though at never so great a Distance from him, when the Law gives him a just Right to it, and he accordingly enjoys the Issues and Profits of it; so may we be said through Faith, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, when we are made Partakers of the Benefits of that Sacrifice, which he offered in his Body, and by the shedding of his Blood for us.

Q 210. What are the Benefits whereof we are Partakers thereby? I mean, by the LORD'S SUPPER?

A. The strengthening and refreshing of our Souls through Faith by the Body and Blood of Christ (a), as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine (b). (a) John vi. 35. *I am the Bread of Life: He that cometh to me, shall never hunger: And he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. y 51, 54.* (b) Psal. civ. 15.

Q 211.

Q 211. But suppose an impenitent Sinner comes to the Lord's Supper, does he receive the Body and Blood of Christ, or any manner of Benefit by it?

A. Not in the least; but on the contrary is guilty of a very great Sin. 1 Cor. xi. 29 *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.* & 27.

Q 212 What then is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?

A. To examine themselves. 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

Q 213. Concerning what must they examine?

A. They must Examine themselves, whether or no they are such as they ought, and as in their Baptism they promised and vowed to be: (Q. 13.) Or in other Words, Whether they repent them truly of their former Sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life, and to have a lively Faith in Gods Mercies through Christ, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and to be in Charity with all Men.

Q 214. Why must they thus examine themselves?

A. That they may know whether they are acceptable to God (a), and consequently whether or no they are worthy Receivers of this Holy Sacrament; the Danger of receiving it unworthily being very great (b). (a) Acts x. 35. *He that feareth him and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him.* Rom. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10. Psal. xv. 1, &c. (b) Q. 211. Prov. xv. 8.

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SOME

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One Day well ;

BY WHICH

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TO SPEND

His whole LIFE well.

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P R E F A C E.

Altho' the Design of this little Book be not to instruct a Christian in the whole of his Duty but only to furnish him with some few Directions which may be of constant and daily use to him; yet I am very much inclined to think, that if once a Man brings himself (through the Grace of God) to a constant habit of observing the Rules which are here set down, he will find a religious and virtuous Life in all Points to be not only so easy but delightful also, as never to break off the Course of it while he has any time to live.

As, therefore, I would earnestly persuade every man by reading and hearing of the holy Scriptures, and other religious Books and Discourses to endeavour to get a full and comprehensive knowledge of his Duty in all its branches; so will I venture in a particular manner to recommend the following Directions to him, beseeching him daily and hourly to weigh and consider them, and to have his Thoughts almost continually upon them, until he renders them familiar both to his memory and practice.

And if he be a Parent, I would not only put him in mind of setting a good and virtuous Example before his Children, but also desire him to make a trial of their getting by heart all the short Prayers and Ejaculations hereafter set down, and often examine them what they are to say at their going to Bed, at their first awaking at their putting on their Cloaths, &c. that by this means Virtue and true Piety may take firm hold of them, before they come to be exposed to the Temptations of the World.

S O M E

S H O R T and P L A I N

D I R E C T I O N S

For the spending of One Day well, &c.

HAVING over Night resolved to spend the next Day as an honest Man, and a good Christian ought to do, a little before you betake yourself to your Rest, say the following short Prayer, not hastily and confusedly (as the Custom is with many when they address themselves to God) but carefully, attentively, and with all the Deliberation that may be.

O Lord God, make me, I beseech thee, truly penitent for all my Sins past; careful and watchful against them for the time to come, and unfeignedly thankful for all the Mercies and Blessings which thou hast vouchsafed unto me in the whole course of my Life. Pardon whatever I have done amiss, for the sake of Christ Jesus, who died for me; and give me the Grace and Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that I may be enabled to spend the whole remainder of my Life in a true and faithful Obedience to thy Laws. At this time particularly beseech thee, O Lord, to grant me such rest and refreshment this Night, as may help to fit and prepare me to spend the ensuing Day, as I have resolved, in thy fear and service. All which I beg of thine infinite

finite Mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

And then as you are undressing yourself, going into your Bed, and settling to sleep, think with yourself, that as you now put off your Cloaths, and lay yourself down in your Bed to rest; so, within a few Days, the time shall certainly come, when your Body shall be wrapt in a winding-sheet, and laid in the Grave: Upon which occasion, say after this, or the like manner: *Good God, give me thy Grace, I beseech thee, that I may ever be mindful of my Death, and always prepared for it. And whenever my Soul shall depart from my Body, O receive it into Bliss and Happiness. And as I hope through thy Mercy, that when this Night is ended, I shall rise from my Bed in health to do thee service; so grant that, at the last Day, my Body may be raised from the Grave, and reunited to my Soul, that I may dwell with thee, and praise thee to all Eternity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

2. As often as you shall happen to awake in the Night, call God into your Thoughts; and lift up your Heart to him in some short Ejaculation: As, *Lord, bless and protect me the Remainder of this Night, and for evermore; O thou who never sleepest, watch over me who am unable without thee to help myself, And then compose yourself quietly to sleep again.*

3. When the Morning comes, suffer not the World, nor any thing which belongs to it, to take Possession of your Thoughts, until you have dedicated yourself unto Almighty God: Which do in these, or the like Words, as soon as you are well awake: *O God, I thank thee that thou hast not shut me up this Night in perpetual Darkness; but hast of thy Goodness added one day more to my Life. O grant that I may so employ both this, and all the rest of my Days in thy Service, that in the end I may be a Partaker*

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taker of Life everlasting; through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

4. Lye no longer in your Bed than is proper and necessary for your moderate Refreshment; nor waste any part of your precious time in Idleness: But rise as soon as conveniently you can; and put yourself in a posture for the necessary and useful business of the day. And as you first begin to raise yourself, say these, or the like Words: *Lord, as I now rise from my bed in health of body (blessed be thy holy name for it) so grant me thy Grace to spend my time here in such a manner, as at the last day I may obtain a joyful Resurrection to everlasting Life, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.*

5. As you are dressing yourself say, *Lord, as I cover my Body with these Garments, that my nakedness may not be exposed to the Eyes of the World; so give me thy Grace that my Soul may be cloathed with Righteousness, that Sin may not expose me to eternal shame and punishment at the last great Day, for Jesus Christ his sake.*

6. And if you are putting on any thing by way of Ornament, say thus: *Lord, if cleansing and adorning my Body would render me as comely and acceptable to thy sight, as such things commonly do in the eyes of the World; what care and pains would I take that no spot, nor any indecency should appear about me? but alas! what trifles are these things to thee? Poor Lazarus was clothed in rags, and his Body all loathsoms and deformed with sores, Luke xvi. 20. yet his Soul was beautiful, and adorned with piety; and that made him acceptable to thee; when at the same time the rich man, with all his pure and fine linen, was utterly rejected. Whatever sort of apparel my Body is cloathed with, let not my Soul want the wedding Garment of true holiness, that I be not for ever cast out from thy presence, for Jesus Christ his sake.*

7. As soon as you are drest, retire yourself to your Closet, if you have one ; or else to a Garden Field, or some private corner of the House. And if you are Master of your own leisure, or if it be the Lord's Day, that you are free from other Business, spend some time in reading attentively some part either of the holy Scriptures, or of some other good Book, which may help to teach and stir you up to your Duty : And when you have done, address yourself to God in Prayer. For your direction wherein there are so many excellent Forms already published in divers Books of Piety and Devotion, that it is needless to set down one here at large. But let your business be what it will, and never so urgent, yet do not any day enter upon it before you have offered up your Devotions to Almighty God, at least in such short Form as this : *Blessed Lord ! I return thee humble and hearty thanks for all the Mercies and Blessings both spiritual and temporal, which thou hast vouchsafed to me, and to all men ; I acknowledge myself to have been a great sinner, and therefore to be unworthy of all thy favours. But, Lord, give me Grace to repent ; and pardon all my sins, for the sake of Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of the whole world. For whose sake also, I beseech thee to give both to me and all men, all such things as thou seest to be necessary both for our Souls and Bodies. Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* And if the Place into which you are retired be secret from the sight of all Men, offer up your Prayers to God on your Knees : But if it be not, you may pray as you stand or as you walk, that you may not seem to desire to be seen of Men, Mar. vi. 5. And if your Heart be truly devout and humble, your Prayer will be accepted, whatever Posture your Body is in.

8. As for the Lord's Day ; let it be your constant care to spend it always (as much as human Infirmitie shall permit) in the Worship of God both public

and private; in reading and hearing his holy Word; and such good Books or Discourses as are agreeable thereto; and works of Charity and Compassion to such as are in distress or poverty: Avoiding not only all Sports and Pastimes (as they are called) but also the giving or receiving of any Visits, except such as Charity and Christianity do oblige you to. And altho' upon such other Days, as by the Church are appointed to be kept holy, we may innocently take a greater liberty; yet even upon those days also, according as we have leisure for it, we should not fail to spend somewhat more of our time in exercises of Piety and Religion, than what, it may be, our constant business will at other times permit us to do.

9. But my design at present, is chiefly to direct you, how the common and ordinary Days of every Week are to be spent. To proceed therefore: As soon as you have performed your Morning Devotions, then set yourself to some honest business, whereby you may be the better enabled to do good, both to yourself and others: And, except your health do necessarily require it, never spend a whole Day (or very rarely) in what we call Recreation; and much less in downright Idleness: Remembring that, at the last Day, you will be called to a strict account how you have spent that precious time which was given you to do good, and to work out your Salvation. Now the morning being allowed by all to be the best time for business, be sure that you constantly (or generally at least) thus employ it. And if you have no other necessary or useful business to engage you, betake yourself to the reading of some good Book, whereby you may improve your Understanding, and become both wiser and better. And before you enter upon business each day, put up this short Ejaculation: *Good God, be pleased so*
to

to prevent and direct me by thy Grace, that I may follow my calling and worldly Business honestly and uprightly, avoiding all cheating and lying, and all manner of deceit; and so endeavouring to make provision for myself and Family here, as that I may not forfeit that eternal provision which thou hast made for me in Heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

10. When it is Noon, sit down to your Meat, (except upon such days as you think it proper to keep a Fast) and never forget to crave God's Blessing upon your Food before you eat it; nor be ashamed of so good a Practice, however with many it be grown out of a fashion. And take especial care that you be not guilty of any Excess, either in eating or drinking; but *put a knife to thy throat*, that is, curb or restrain thy desires, *if thou be a man given to Appetite*, Prov. xxiii. 2. And when at any time you are to sit down to a Feast, or to such fare as is better than ordinary, whether it be eating or drinking, at home or abroad, beg privately of God to keep you from all Excess; using this, or the like short Form: *O Lord, teach me, I pray thee in the midst of Plenty to study and practise Temperance, that while I am refreshing and supporting my frail Body, I may not destroy my precious and immortal Soul; thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.* And this same Practice must be repeated in the Evening, if you eat any Supper, or take any Repast at that time.

11. When you have done your Meal, give thanks after Meat; and then privately to yourself, use this, or the like short Ejaculation: *Lord, as thou hast been pleased to give me food for the sustaining of my frail Body (for which I most humbly thank thee) so be thou pleased to afford me thy Grace, for the strengthening and confirming my Soul in piety and virtue.* And grant that both my body and soul may al-

ways

ways be dedicated to thee, and employed in thy service, and to thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12. Altho' the greatest part of the Afternoon also ought to be spent in some honest business and employment, yet such is the frailty of our nature, that sometimes it is even necessary that we should a little refresh and divert ourselves with what we commonly call *recreation*; under which I also comprehend chearful and innocent Conversation with our Neighbours.

13. Now when at any time you are going, for a while, to lay your business aside, and thus to recreate yourself, lift up your thoughts before-hand to God, after this manner: *Lord, as thou hast been pleased to allow me to refresh my frail nature with a little innocent chearfulness; grant that I may always make use of this liberty with such prudence and caution, as not to forfeit that everlasting joy which I hope for in the world to come, for Jesus Christ his sake.*

14. Run not hastily upon any sort of Recreation: But first consider whether it be innocent, and then be sure you spend not too much time at it. He who spends that time in mere recreation, which may be employed in some useful business, most certainly wastes it.

15. If at any time you recreate yourself by playing with others at any sort of Game, be sure never to play for so much as to be under any great concern whether you win or lose. Where Men play for so much as to be eagerly concerned about it, I see no diversion there can be in it, except it be the hope they have of winning, from those who play or bet with them; which if it be not coveting that which is our Neighbour's, yet I am sure comes very near it. And on the other side, if a Man loses much, it is apt to betray him to anger and fretfulness; the Consequences of which are never

never good, and sometimes have proved very
vil.

16. Endeavour to be always in good humour but be upon your guard whenever you are incline to be chearful or merry. And tho' sometime may be fit to speak hastily; yet watch over yourself, and strive, if you can, never to be angry. For Mirth, if not carefully curbed and managed will betray you to obscenity and profaneness. And Anger, always, more or less, disturbs and hinders the use of ones Reason, and makes a Man unpardonable, while it lasts, of acting up to the Rules of decency and prudence. And in order to the curbing and suppressing of all extravagant motions both of Mirth and Anger, let me recommend this one Rule to you; that is to say, That you always, and upon all occasions, accustom yourself to speak in a low voice. Bring yourself but once effectually and constantly to this practice, and you will soon by experience find, that Mirth and Anger are not ungovernable things. The consequence of which will be such a sweet and satisfactory calm in your mind, as is not easily to be conceived by any one that has not had experience of it.

17. And this puts me in mind of a most necessary piece of Advice; in the observation of which, you ought to be daily and hourly careful; namely, to govern your Tongue well; that you may, by the Grace and Assistance of God, keep yourself innocent from the variety of sin and scandal, of which this unruly Member is so often the occasion. And therefore, whenever you are about to join in Company, and mix in Conversation with others, fail not before-hand to make this, or the like short Prayer: *Lord, be thou pleased to set a watch upon my mouth, and to keep the door of my lips, that nothing may go out thence but what is decent and se-*

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and every way becoming the mouth of a Christian, and one who expects to be called to account for every idle word, at the great and dreadful Day of Judgment. And accordingly, upon all occasions, let your Discourse be, First, true and sincere, and free from all lying and equivocation; Secondly, mild and charitable, avoiding all unnecessary or bitter reflections upon others (whose Faults you ought rather to conceal than expose) and all reviling and opprobrious names or expressions; which ought not to be given or used to the poorest Servant or Underling, *Matt. v. 22.* for whom *Christ* died, as much as for the greatest Men. And lastly, Let your Discourse be always agreeable to the Rules of Piety, avoiding all profane, obscene, and smutty Jest, all manner of Oaths or Curses, or evil Wishes; and all mention of the name of God or *Christ*, except it be with due honour and respect to the Divine Majesty.

18. Relieving the Poor, and giving of Alms, is a duty more often and earnestly press'd, perhaps, than any other throughout the holy Scripture. Every day then, or at least every week, be sure you fail not to lay aside something for charitable Uses, in a sufficient proportion to the worldly substance that God has blest you with. And think often with yourself after this manner: *God has been pleased so to bless my Labour and Industry, that I have gained so much, or so much, this Week, or this Month. Or God has provided for me by his good providence, that I have so much a year coming in to me. Now how much of this ought I to return, in works of Charity, to my good God, to whom I am entirely beholden for the Whole! O let me not be niggardly to the Poor, considering, that what is given to them, is lent to the Lord, Prov. xix. 17. And accepted of by Christ, as if it had been bestowed upon himself, Matt. xxv. 40.*
And

And when you have thus set apart what you design for Charity, be careful to distribute it (not to every idle, or vagrant Beggar, but) to such as you can find to be the truest Objects of Pity and Compassion.

19. Whatever business you have at any time been doing, whatever recreation you have been taking, or whatever Company you have been in; as soon as you have done, immediately look back, recollect the several Circumstances of what is past, and seriously consider whether or no you have misbehaved yourself in any particular Instance; and if you have, then beg God's Pardon, and resolve a-new, to be more careful hereafter upon the like occasion. And always in the Evening, before you betake yourself to sleep, be sure in like manner to look back upon the Transactions of the whole day, giving God still the Glory of what you have done well, and craving his forgiveness for what you have done amiss; together with his Grace and Assistance, that you may do better for the time to come. And altho' sometimes, in a Morning, business may so surprize you, as not to give you much time for your Devotion, yet at Night you may surely borrow a little time, even from your sleep, to be bestowed in private upon the service of Almighty God: For the manner of doing which, I again refer you to some of those excellent Books of Piety and Devotion, of which I have made mention *Seet. 7.* But if your business keeps you up never so late, or however tired you may be with the labour of the day, yet never settle yourself to sleep, without seriously and devoutly saying some such short Prayer as that which I have there directed for the Morning; and then conclude with that same Prayer and Ejaculation which I have set down *Seet. 1.* at the beginning of these Directions.

AN

ANSWER

To all the

EXCUSES and PRETENCES,
Which Men ordinarily make for
their not coming to the
HOLY COMMUNION.

To which is added,

A Brief Account of the End and
Design of the HOLY COMMUNION,
the Obligation to receive it; the
Way to prepare for it,

And the BEHAVIOUR of ourselves both
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An *ANSWER* to all the *EXCUSES* and *PRETENCES*, which Men ordinarily make for their not coming to the *HOLY COMMUNION*.



Certain Man made a great Supper, and bade many; and sent his Servant at Supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one Consent began TO MAKE EXCUSE,

Luke xiv. 16, &c. The Design of this Parable is to represent the Manner of God's dealing with the People of the *Jews*, upon their rejecting the Faith of *Christ*, and refusing to embrace the Gospel. The Apostles of *Christ*, who were the Servants of God, were sent and commanded, in the first Place, to preach the glad Tidings of the Gospel to them, and to invite them to come and partake of that Blessing and Happiness, which was offered them by God, through Faith in, and Obedience unto his Son *Christ Jesus*. But they, generally having their Hearts wholly, in a manner, addicted to the Love of this World, had no Inclination to receive so pure and spiritual an Institution, and did not only themselves reject, but also persecuted others for embracing the *Christian* Profession; despising and treading under Foot the Son of God; and counting the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith they should have been sanctified, an unholy Thing: and even doing Despite unto the Spirit of Grace, which would have wrought upon their

their Hearts, in order to their Conversion. As therefore the Man in this Parable, who made the Supper, was offended with those, who did not come when they were invited, and therefore wholly excluded them from his Table, and sent his Servant, to call others in their room (as you may find it in the latter part of it) so did Almighty God cast off the People of the Jews, upon their obstinate rejecting of *Jesus Christ*; giving them up to be destroyed and scattered by the Power of the Romans; and commanded the Apostles to go out into all Parts of the World, to gather a Church, and a peculiar people unto him from among the Gentiles. But my present Aim, in reflecting upon this Parable, lies clear another Way; namely, to represent and reprove those *Excuses* and *Pretextes*, which so many Men do make for their gross Neglect of the *Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, notwithstanding that God, by the Mouth of his Ministers, does so frequently call, and earnestly invite them thereunto. And indeed this Matter is in so lively a manner represented in the whole Design of it, that I think it is scarce possible to draw a more exact Parallel.

For here, in the first place, we have Almighty God making a Supper for us, for the feeding and nourishing our Souls in Virtue and Piety, through the Passion and Death of our Saviour *Christ Jesus*, which he has appointed for ever to be commemorated, by our eating of this Bread, and drinking of this Cup, in Remembrance of him. To this Supper we are, not once only, but often bidden, by the frequent Admonitions and Exhortations of God's Ministers addressed unto us, that we should come and be Partakers of this Holy Communion; and as the Guests, who were in-

vited

ited in this Parable, had framed some weak and impertinent Excuses for their not coming; one had bought a Piece of Ground, another five Yoke of Oxen, and a third had married a Wife, none of which things needed to have hindered them from accepting of the good Man's Kindness; just so we, when, from Month to Month, and from Year to Year, we continually turn our Backs upon God's Holy Table, have yet some sort of Pretextes, wherewith we endeavour to satisfy our Consciences, and to excuse this gross and scandalous Neglect, of which we are guilty.

That our Saviour *Christ Jesus* died for our Sins; that it is only for the sake of his Merits and Sufferings, that we can hope for Pardon and eternal Life at the Hand of God; that, before his Death, he left this Command with all that should be called by his Name, that they should eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, in remembrance of him, whereby we are obliged to shew forth his Death until his second coming; and, lastly, that this Ordinance is the *Communion* of the Body and Blood of *Christ*; or in other Terms, the Means whereby we do communicate in the Benefits of that Sacrifice which *Christ* offered, and in the Merits of that Death and Passion which he underwent in his Body, and by the shedding of his Blood for us; and consequently, that the receiving hereof, if duly performed, is not only our Duty, but also a great Advantage and Benefit unto us. All these Things, I say, are so universally owned by all who profess Christianity, that I need not offer any thing for the Proof of them, or any part of them. But then, surely, one would think that when Men, who are thus persuaded, do so often, and for so long a time, absent themselves from this

Ordinance, there must be some insuperable Difficulties and Obstacles in their Way, which are beyond their Strength or Power to remove; or else that they would never, at the same Time, both neglect their Duty and forego their Interest. And yet I doubt not but to make it appear as plainly as any thing can be, that there is nothing which we can at any Time pretend as a Hindrance of our coming to the Holy Communion, but what either is really, or ought to be, no Hindrance at all; or else is such as it is in our Power, by that Grace and Assistance which God never denies to those who seek it, wholly to remove and put out of the way.

To come to the Matter then, and that I may proceed in an orderly Method, I shall reduce all the Impediments, which Men do ever alledge for their not coming unto the Holy Communion, to these five Heads; that is to say, either, *First*, That they are Sinners, and therefore dare not come; or *Secondly*, That they are so continually engaged and taken up with Business, that they have not time to prepare themselves for it; or, *Thirdly*, That when they do endeavour to prepare themselves, they find that they cannot do it as it ought to be done; or, *Fourthly*, That having formerly received the Communion, they find themselves never the better for it, and therefore think it to no purpose to come again; or, *Lastly*, That they are not well satisfied with the manner of celebrating, administering, and receiving this Ordinance in our Church; and therefore cannot join with our congregations in it: Nor is there, I think, any Thing that can be urged by way of Excuse for not coming to the Holy Communion, but what I shall fairly examine, and, I hope, effectually Confute, under some one or other of these particulars.

First,

First then, Some Men may say, That they are great Sinners, and therefore upon that Account are not come to the Holy Communion, for fear, lest they should be unworthy Receivers, and so, instead of obtaining any Benefit thereby, should only eat and drink their own Damnation.

To this I answer, That If a Man lies under the Guilt of any Sin, and does not repent of it, and heartily resolve to forsake and amend it; it is indeed a Presumption, and a Sin for such a Person, whilst he continues in that State, to come to the Communion. But then I must tell him also, that not only his coming to the Holy Communion, but even his very Prayers are an Abomination to God, *Prov. xxviii. 9.* For what is it else, but a perfect Affront, and even a mocking of the divine Majesty, for a Man to make a shew of Worship and Honour to him, whilst at the same time he goes on in wilful Disobedience to his known Commands? Which I wish were well and seriously considered by those Men, who make no Scruple of addressing themselves to God in Prayer, whilst by reason of their Sins, of which they have not repented, they dare not approach unto this Holy Table.

But whatever Sins a Man has been guilty of in times past, if he truly repents of them, and heartily forsakes them for the Time to come, God has so often, and so plainly promised, in this Case, to grant a full and free Pardon of them, that they cannot justly be pretended as any Obstacle, which should hinder us from approaching to him in any of his Ordinances.

Since then it is in the Power of every Man (at least of every one, who, by a long Course of Wickedness, has not provoked God wholly to withdraw his Grace from him) by that Grace

and Assistance, which God continually offers unto us, to repent of his Sins, and amend his Life, such a Man looks upon his Sins as a Bar between him and the Holy Communion; yet it is plain, such a Bar, as it is in his Power to remove, and therefore can never justly be pleaded as an Excuse in his Behalf.

But some Men perhaps may say, that though he should beg God's Pardon for his Sins past, and sincerely resolve to forsake them, yet he fears that being frail, he may, some time or other, be prevailed on, by his own Weakness, or the Strength of a Temptation, to break those Resolutions which he made, and return again to his Sins; and if this should ever be the Case with him, he doubts whether God would ever again admit him to Pardon and Reconciliation; and therefore he thinks it safer to abstain from the Holy Communion, rather than to run the Hazard of being for ever excluded from the Hopes of Heaven.

In Answer to this, I shall offer these Three Things.

First, Although a Man does plainly foresee, that hereafter he shall be most likely sometimes to fall into some Sins of Frailty and Infirmity (such as a hasty Word, or a sudden and unadvised Action) yet this ought not to hinder him from coming to the Holy Communion; for as St. James tells us, that *in many Things we offend all*, Jam. iii. 2. so is there not any Man upon the Face of the Earth, who can be absolutely sure, that he shall always hereafter keep himself free from all Manner of Sin whatsoever. On the contrary, as there is no Man but what has his Share, more or less, of human Infirmities, so is it most reasonable to conclude, that, in

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for not coming to the Sacrament.

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the Course of his Life, these will sometimes unavoidably surprize and betray him into some Sins, Against these our Infirmities, therefore, we must continually strive, and we may reasonably hope, that, by God's Grace, and our own diligent and careful Endeavours, we may every Day more and more prevail against them; but if this were a good Reason for abstaining from the Holy Communion, because a Man cannot at once get a full and perfect Victory over them, I cannot see how, even the best of Men (who cannot pretend to absolute Perfection) could safely venture to partake of it; and consequently this would be the way wholly to lay aside, and abolish the very Ordinance itself.

Secondly, But as for wilful and deliberate Sins, or returning again into an habitual Course of Wickedness, there is no Man but, by the Grace of God, and his own Endeavours, may, if he pleases, for ever secure himself against it. For however God may think it fit, for our greater Humility, and a further Trial of us, to leave us still exposed to some of the common Infirmities of our Nature, yet in respect of all habitual or deliberate Sins, we may assure ourselves, that *he is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that we may (if it be not our own Fault) be able to bear it,* 1 Cor. x. 13. Nor will he fail to draw nigh to us, whilst we continue careful to draw nigh unto him, Jam. iv. 8. Let us then but stedfastly resolve, that we will be hearty and industrious in doing what lies in our own Power, and we need not be discouraged by any such Fears as these, as long as we are secure, that God will never let us want his Assistance.

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But, *Thirdly*, let us put the Case as bad as may be: That, after a serious Repentance, and most stedfast Resolutions of Amendment, ratified and confirmed by the Reception of the Holy Communion, a Man should be so far prevailed upon by the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, as to return again to his former Wickedness in as high, or a higher Degree than before; yet, even in this Case, we cannot conclude, that such a Person is for ever excluded by God from all Possibility of Pardon and Reconciliation. There are indeed some Passages of Scripture, that do represent the Condition of such an one to be very dreadful and dangerous; as *Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6*, and *Chap. x. 26, 27. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21*. But if, on the other side, we consider how often, and how highly the Mercy of God is set forth and magnified even towards the greatest Sinners, upon their true Repentance; that *he has no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way, and live*, *Ezek. xxxiii. 11*. that *he is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance*, *2 Pet. iii. 9*. that *though our Sins be as Scarlet, or as red as Crimson, yet God is ready, upon our Repentance, to make them as white as Wooll, or Snow*, *Isai. i. 18*. From these, and many such Passages of Scripture, I think we may well gather, that if the most profligate and relapsed Sinner does, even after a long Time, come at last to such a Sense of his own Condition, as thoroughly to turn from the Wickedness that he hath committed, and to live the remainder of his Days in the Practice of Virtue and good Works; doing that which is lawful and right, and, notwithstanding all his Failures, yet at last continues and perseveres there

as much as that even such a Man as this *shall save his soul alive*, Ezek. xviii. 27. Although at the same time it stands with a great deal of Reason, that the greater a Mans Sins have been, and the oftener he has relapsed into them; the deeper his Sorrow, and the more laborious his Repentance must be, in order to obtain his Pardon. But since a Possibility of Pardon there is, even in this Case itself, we must not make the contrary Fear a Pretence for keeping ourselves back from any of the Ordinances of God, and from a more immediate and intimate Communion with him.

And thus much for the first Impediment.

But, *Secondly*, some Men pretend, that they are so continually engaged, and taken up with Business, that they have not time to prepare themselves for the Holy Communion, and therefore do not come to it.

To such Men as these I answer, that this Business which they pretend, is either lawful Business, or unlawful; if it be unlawful Business, and such cannot be followed with a good Conscience, it must be renounced, and wholly laid aside; and to read this as a Reason for not coming to the Holy Communion, is altogether to aggravate, instead of to excuse, our Neglect: But if the Business be itself lawful and followed in a lawful way; if it neither contains, nor engages us in any thing which is dishonest, or any way contrary to the Law of God; such Business as this is so far from unqualifying a Man, that it really rather renders him the more fit to receive the Holy Communion. For as Idleness is itself a Sin, and the Mother, or at least the Nurse of all manner of Wickedness, so honest and lawful Business is a Duty which every Man is obliged to be diligent in, 1 Thess. iv. 11. Eph.

iv. 28. And certainly the Performance of a Man's Duty will never render him the less acceptable to God, or unfit to draw near unto him in this or any other of his Ordinances.

But there is one particular sort of Business, in which some Men think that whilst they are engaged, they cannot be well prepared for the Holy Communion, and that is a Law Suit. But to this the very same Answer must be given that is already returned to the Pretence of Business in general. If a Man engages in a Suit of Law, with a Design to wrong or defraud another; if, in the Management of it, he has recourse to any base and wicked Arts or Contrivances; if not contented fairly to try the Merits of the Cause, he strives, by all the ways he can, to cast personal Reflections upon his Adversary; or, in a word, if herein he proceeds in such a way as is contrary either to Justice or Charity; such a Law Suit as this, I confess, renders a Man altogether unfit to approach unto God in any way whatsoever; not only whilst he is engaged in it, but also until he has made Restitution and Satisfaction, to the best of his Power, for all the Wrong that he has thereby done unto his Neighbour. But then why will any Man, who pretends to Christianity, engage in such a Matter as this, which is contrary to common Honesty and a good Conscience? Or if unadvisedly he has engaged himself before he knew what he did; why does he not withdraw, and forbear to prosecute an unjust Cause, or a just one in an unjust Way? Why does not he make Satisfaction to his Neighbour, if he has done him any Wrong? And how can he think to plead that as an Excuse for not coming to God's Holy Table, which it is in his Power to lay aside, and to remedy whenever he pleases?

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But, on the other side, if he designs no more than fairly to make use of the Law of the Land, and the Power of the Magistrate (who is ordained of God) either to defend or recover what, in Conscience he is verily persuaded is his just and lawful Right; if in the Management of his Business he proceeds honestly, and without any Fraud or Juggle; and, lastly, if he bears no Malice, nor offers any way to vent his Spleen against the Person of his Adversary, but is always free and ready to do him any reasonable Office of Kindness or Friendship; in such a Law Suit as this, there is nothing which is contrary to the Duty of a Christian, nor consequently any thing, which needs be in the least a Hindrance to his coming to the Holy Communion.

But some perhaps will say, that although there is nothing sinful or unlawful either in the Business they are about, or in their way of managing or following it; yet their Time is so wholly taken up thereby, that they have not Leisure for the Performance of those solemn and particular Devotions, which are necessary, in order to their due Preparation. Nay, such may be the Condition of some, that have not, it may be, so much as a Place of *they* Retirement for their private Devotions (which may be the Case of many Servants and private Soldiers, and such like) and how can they prepare themselves as they ought, or how shall they venture to come, if they are not so prepared?

To this I answer, That it is a mistake, which some well-meaning Men have entertained, that they think they must not venture to receive the Holy Communion, except they say so many Prayers, and spend so many Hours in Retirement and Meditation for some Days immediately before

fore the Celebration of it. Where a Man indeed is at his own Command, and Master of his own Time, he is much to be approved of, and commended, if, upon such an Occasion as this, he spends more Hours than at other Times, in private Prayers, Reading, and Meditation, that he may trim his Lamp, before he goes to meet the Bridegroom, and cleanse and adorn his Wedding Garment, before he comes to the Marriage Feast. But where the publick Service of a Man's Country, or the private Necessities of himself or his Family do engage him in so much Business, as that he has not such Leisure for Retirement; if in the midst of his Affairs he ever takes care to have God in his Thoughts, and often to lift up his Heart to him by private Ejaculations; and when he has neither Chamber nor Closet, Garden nor Field, to withdraw himself into, if he but seriously retires into his own Thoughts (which a Man may do in any Place, upon his Bed at Midnight, and even in the midst of the greatest Croud in the Day-time) and there enquires into his past Sins, and renews his Resolutions of Amendment; and if all this proceeds from an *honest and well meaning Heart*, truly and affectionately disposed to the Service of God, and to the Practice of Piety; no doubt but it shall be as well accepted by God, as the more solemn Devotions of those, who have better Opportunity of such Performances.

And thus much for the second Impediment.

Thirdly, Some pretend, That when they do endeavour to prepare themselves for the Holy Communion, they find they cannot do it as it ought to be done; and therefore they do not come. To the several Scruples of which sort of Men, I shall return brief and distinct Answers.

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Some then do apprehend, that they are not fit to come, because they are ignorant, and not well grounded and instructed in the Principles of Religion;

To this I answer, That indeed, if a Man be ignorant of those Things, which are ordinarily necessary to the Salvation of every *Christian*, it is evidently not fit that he should come to the Holy Communion, until such Time as he be better instructed. But such Instruction as this is so easy to be had (at least among us) that it must be every Man's own Fault if he wants it. For how easy is it for every Man, who either reads the Scripture, or hears it read and expounded in our Congregations, sufficiently to learn all the great and necessary Things of the *Christian* Religion? As for Example, That God created all Things; that *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God; that he came into the World, and took our Nature upon him, to suffer for our Redemption; that after he had suffered, he rose again from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven, where he remains for ever in the Glory and Majesty of God, making eternal Intercession for us; and that he shall come again at the End of the World to judge both the Living and the Dead (who shall at that Time be raised again) and to sentence every Man either to everlasting Happiness, or eternal Misery: That every *Christian* is to be admitted into the Church by Baptism; that it is his Duty to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World; and that it is by the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, who is the Giver of spiritual Life unto us, that we are alone enabled to perform these Duties; and lastly, that, in Remembrance of the Death and Passion of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, we are commanded to eat of
that

that Bread and drink of that Cup, which he has appointed, and which is the Communion of his Body and Blood; that is to say, the Means whereby we do communicate in the Benefits of the Sacrifice which he offered, and in the Merits of his Passion, which he underwent in his *Body*, and by the shedding of his *Blood* for our Sakes, as I have already said: All this, I say, is so easy to be learnt and understood, that it is a great shame for any one, who lives in a *Christian Country*, to be ignorant of any Part of it. And he, who is thus far instructed in his Religion, and endeavours, according to his Ability, to increase his Knowledge of divine Things, and hereunto adds the honest and sincere Practice of what he understands, needs never fear, that God will reject him for want of more Knowledge: For although we must, according to our Capacity, *add to our Virtue Knowledge*; yet it is not abundance of Knowledge, but much Honesty, Charity, and true Piety, that renders us acceptable and pleasing to God. See *1 Cor. i. 19.* to the seventh Verse of the second Chapter.

Again, Some do find their Faith to be weak and wavering, and perplexed with Doubts and Scruples in Matters of Religion; and therefore are afraid to come.

To this I answer, That indeed the stronger and firmer a Man's Faith is, so much the better; and we ought to endeavour, as much as in us lies, that our Faith may be ever built upon sure and solid Principles, as well for our own Comfort and Satisfaction, as that we may be better able, upon Occasion, to give an Answer to every one who shall ask us the Reason of the Hope that is in us, *1 Pet. iii. 15.* But when a Man has done what he can to strengthen and confirm his Faith,

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if it still continues infirm and weak; yet if he be honest and pious in his Life and Practice, he is never the less acceptable to God for the Weakness of his Faith: For Strength of Faith is not a Thing in our Power, and therefore not so much a Duty in us, as a Reward which God is pleased to bestow, in such a Measure as he thinks fit, upon those who are sincere and diligent in his Service; and *he that is weak in the Faith*, may yet be a very good *Christian*, and fit to be received into the Church of *Christ*, altho' he be not qualified for *doubtful Disputations*, Rom. xiv. 1. As long as a Tree continues to bring forth Plenty of Fruit, we are sure it is alive, nor do we presently cut it down, and cast it into the Fire, because it is not altogether so well fixed at the Root; and therefore it may be subject to be shaken by the Violence of the Wind: And the weakest Faith, if it produces abundance of good Works, shall be accepted by God; when the strongest Faith, if barren and unfruitful, shall be rejected; and set at nought by him. See *Jam. ii. 14, &c.* Whenever therefore an honest and well-disposed Man finds his Faith to be any way weak and wavering, let him take up the good Man's Speech in the Gospel, *Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief*, Mark ix. 24. and let him never fear but that God, who is infinitely gracious and merciful, will accept of him.

Some, again, are afraid, that they do not love God as well as they ought; and the Reason of this Fear is, because they do not find in themselves such warm and affectionate Motions of their Minds towards him, as they apprehend to be suitable to his infinite Excellency and Goodness: And for this Reason they dare not venture to come.

To this I answer, That indeed the more ardent and affectionate our Love to God is, so much the better is that, as well as our Faith, for being strong and unshaken; but as our Faith is to be judged of by its Fruitfulness, rather than its Firmness (as I have just now shewn) so the Holy Scripture teaches us, That the Love of God consists altogether in keeping his Commandments, 1 John v. 3.

Some People are naturally of such a Temper, as more easily to be moved with a passionate Affection towards those they love, than others are; and yet others, who do not find such warm Motions within themselves, may be as ready and as willing as they, to do Acts of Kindness where they profess a Friendship. Nor is the Love of the latter sort ever the less to be valued, because it appears to be seated and fixed more in the Judgment and Will, which are subject to less Alteration than the Affections, as the true Love of a Wife to her Husband, is to be measured by her Readiness to obey and please him in all Things, much rather than by the Fondness, which she expresses to his Person. If therefore a Man find himself stedfastly resolved with full Purpose of Heart to cleave unto God, and, upon all Occasions, to do what he commands, ever preferring the pleasing of him before any, or all the Honours, Profits, or Pleasures of this World, he may assure himself, that he is a real and true Lover of God; nor need he absent himself from the Holy Communion, for want of that Ardency and Liveliness of Affection to God, which the very best of Men perhaps do oftener wish for than enjoy, or find within themselves.

Others there are, who fear they are not in perfect Charity with all the World: They have sometimes

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Sometimes had to do with Men of base and unjust Dealings, who have broken their Promises, and, it may be, their Oaths, and thereby betrayed them who have depended on them; or have otherwise been guilty of wicked and unworthy Practices. And although, in Obedience to God's Commands, they would not do any thing by way of Revenge, even against these very Men, yet as often as they see them, or do but think of them, they find their very Blood to rise against them, and cannot possibly suppress that Anger and Indignation, which springs up in their Minds against such Persons, and therefore they fear that their Charity is defective, and so dare not come to the Holy Communion.

To this I answer, that our Charity towards Man, as well as our Love to God, is to be measured by the Purposes and Resolutions of our Will, and our Actions consequent thereto, and not by the sudden Motions of our Passions and Affections, which, in the Case above-mentioned, may be scarcely so much in our Power, as wholly to be conquered and stifled by us. But whatever passionate Resentments may force themselves into our Minds upon such Occasions as these, if we do not suffer them to break out into bitter and reproachful Expressions, or malicious and revengeful Actions; and if, in spite of our Anger we do firmly resolve, in Obedience to God's Commands, to return Good, and not Evil for Evil: In a Word, if, as *St. Paul* directs us, when we are angry, we take care, and watch over ourselves, that we *sin not*, Eph. iv. 26. (which is certainly in our Power, thro' the Grace of God, and our own Endeavours) we need not fear that any such inward Motions of our Passions, as we cannot wholly

suppress, but yet do not suffer to break out into any sinful Words or Actions, shall never be imputed to us as a Breach of Charity.

Others, again, are afraid, that they are not sorrowful enough for the Sins which they have committed, because they do not find their Grief so quick and pungent as they think it ought to be, nor strong enough even so much as to bring a Tear from their Eyes; and therefore they dare not venture to come.

To this I answer, that true it is, indeed, that we can never grieve too much for our Sins, whereby we have offended our good and gracious God; and if even *Rivers of Tears* could run down our Eyes, on this Occasion, they would all be but little enough. But yet, after all, our Sorrow for Sin is not to be measured by the Passionateness of it, which is soon over; or the Tears it produces, which are as soon dried up; but is altogether to be estimated by the Amendment which it causes in our Lives. It is a never-failing Rule which *St. Paul* gives us to know godly Sorrow by, which is, that it *worketh Repentance*, 1 Cor. vii. 10. If then a Man has so true and serious a Sense of his Sins, as that it brings him to repentance, that is to say, to a thorough and lasting Reformation of his Life, this Sorrow, though it never affects him in a passionate Way, or draws any Tears at all from his Eyes, yet it is certainly true godly Sorrow, and such as shall be accepted by God, because it *worketh Repentance*, which is the only End for which godly Sorrow is either required or valued.

Others, yet again, there are, who complain, that, when they would set themselves to prepare for the Holy Communion, they in a little Time grow so tired with the Length of those Devo-

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for not coming to the Sacrament. 21

tions which are thereunto required, that they are not able to accomplish what they proposed. And when they would even *force* themselves to continue their Prayers and Meditations, they cannot, with all their Care, keep their Minds fixed and attentive upon what they are about; but their Thoughts will unavoidably wander upon other Things that are idle and impertinent. And this they apprehend to be the Sin of *drawing near to God with their Mouths, and honouring him with their Lips, when their Heart is far from him*, Isa. xxix. 13. and therefore they dare not come unto his Holy Table.

To this I answer, that whenever we address ourselves unto God in Prayer, we ought certainly to use our utmost Endeavours so to fix and compose our Minds, as that our Thoughts may not wander, and go astray, if we can possibly hinder them.

And he who pretends to pray with his Lips, and does not withal strive that his Heart and Mind may be devoutly affected, is undoubtedly guilty of a great Slight put upon the Majesty of God; and may justly be taxed with some Part of that Sin which I but just now made mention of. But when a Man has done the best he can to fix his Thoughts, and to keep his Mind from wandering in Prayer; if, after all this, idle and impertinent Imaginations do, against his Will, croud themselves upon him; and, like Flies, tho' continually beaten off, yet still return again and molest him: In this Case he may well assure himself that God, who is gracious and merciful, will never impute that to him as a Sin, which, with all his Endeavours, he cannot help; But it shall only be reckoned upon the Score of his Infirmities, against which, indeed, he must ever strive;

strive; but, it may be, shall never be able wholly to conquer them as long as he lives.

But there is one Piece of Advice which I think very proper to offer unto those that are in these Circumstances; which is, that they should comprize their private Devotions in as few Words as conveniently they can; and then they will neither be so apt to be tired, nor their Thoughts to wander therein; as when they are drawn out to a greater Length. It is not *much speaking* that makes our Prayers the more acceptable to God, or the sooner heard by him, *Matt. vi. 7.* And it is easy to comprehend all that is extraordinarily necessary to be said in Prayer, in a few Words. The Lord's Prayer is but short, and yet very full; and certainly a Form most acceptable to God. The Publican's *God be merciful to me a Sinner*, *Luke xviii. 13.* was as well received coming from a sincere and honest Heart, as if he had made his Confession in more Words. And there is no manner of doubt, but that short and devout Ejaculations, frequently offered up to God, by a truly pious Soul, shall effectually prevail at the Throne of Grace, when they come from such a Person, as, by reason of his natural Frailty and Infirmity, is not so well able to make longer Prayers.

Again, Some there are who are given to Mirth and Company-keeping; and not knowing well how to become serious and reserved enough to be fit for the Holy Communion, therefore do not come.

In answer, That a cheerful and pleasant Disposition is so far from being unlawful, or any way displeasing to God; that, on the contrary, where it is rightly managed, and kept within due Bounds, it is commonly very serviceable

the promoting of Peace and Love in the World, which is one of the great Ends of *Christian* Religion. Let then a Man but take *Arid* Care, that his Mirth be not sinful in itself, nor instrumental to promote Wickedness in the World: Let him nor droll upon Religion and Piety, nor make a mock of Sin: Let no Jest that is bitter or sarcastical, or tends to the Discredit or Undervaluing of his Neighbour, or which is any way profane, filthy, or obscene, come forth of his Lips; nor let him shew any manner of Delight or Satisfaction when such Things are vented by others; let him abstain from all debauched Songs or Stories, which seem to be contrived on purpose to corrupt the World; and let him never promote, but always, as much as he can, discountenance all manner of Rioting, Drunkenness, Lewdness, and Profaneness: In a Word, let him be sure, that his Mirth betrays neither himself nor others, to any thing which is contrary to Piety, Charity or Sobriety: and as long as he keeps himself within such Bounds as these (which is plainly very possible to every man who will heartily resolve it) he needs not fear that a chearful and facetious Behaviour will render him ever the worse *Christian*, or the less fit to receive the Holy Communion.

And last of all (that I may conclude what I have to say under this Head) some there are, who having met with many Crosses and Afflictions in the World, have their Minds so discomposed, and their Thoughts distracted with Care, Grief, or Trouble, that they cannot settle their Minds, as they think they ought, for the Holy Communion; and therefore they do not come to it.

To this I answer, That if any Trouble or Affliction provokes a Man to Impatience, and prevails so far as to make him murmur and repine against the Providence of God; this, indeed, is a Sin, and must, and may, as all other Sins, be repented of, as I have already said under the first Head of this Discourse. But if there be no more in it than this, that the Crosses and Vexations under which a Man lies, do so discompose his Mind as that he cannot keep his Thoughts from wandering when he is at his Devotion: To this Case I have but just now spoken, and need not repeat what I have said upon it.

And thus I have at last done with the third Impediment, upon which I have been forced the longer to dwell, because of the many Scruples and Objections which it affords.

I shall need to speak but a Word or two to the *Fourth* Impediment, which some Men pretend, namely, That having formerly received the Holy Communion, they find themselves never the better for it, and therefore think it to no purpose to come again.

To which I answer, That if a Man reaps no Benefit by the Reception of the Holy Communion, the Fault is altogether his own, because either he does not duly prepare himself for it, or else does not receive it so often as he should. Some Bodies are so distempered, and Stomachs vitiated, that they turn the best Food into corrupt and evil Nourishment: And if a Man of the most healthy Constitution should eat but one Meal in a Week, he would never keep him in Health and Strength; but let the Stomach be cleansed, and the Body brought into good Order, and then let the Man eat his constant and daily Meals; and he shall find both his Health

And Strength increase upon him. And the Case is
just the same with this spiritual Food, which is ex-
hibited to us in the Holy Sacrament. Whilst the
Soul is polluted and disordered with Sins unre-
pent of, it will certainly rather do us Hurt than
Good to receive it; and when Men partake of it
but once in a Year or two, or, it may be, not so
often, whatever Strength or Refreshment their
Souls begin to find thereby, is lost and forgot be-
fore it comes again to be renewed by the same
Ordinance. But let a Man thoroughly cleanse and
purge his Soul from Sin, by a sincere Repentance,
and with an honest Heart and Mind well prepared,
let him come, as often as he can, to God's Holy
Table; and, by the frequent and constant Use of
this Holy Sacrament, he need not doubt but he
shall find himself continually to grow more and
more in Grace, becoming still better, and better
enabled to resist all Temptations, and daily find
more and more Quiet and Comfort in his Mind
and Conscience.

And thus much for the fourth Impediment.

I come now, in the last Place of all, to speak
a Word or two to those who are not well satisfied
with the Manner of celebrating the Holy Com-
munion in our Church, and therefore will not join
with our Congregations in it.

Two things there are, which are chiefly object-
ed against us in this Case: One, That we make use
of such Ceremonies as they cannot comply with;
and, in particular, that the Holy Communion is,
amongst us, to be received in the posture of Kneel-
ing. And the other is, That we administer it to
a mix'd Congregation, without a strict Enquiry in-
to the Qualifications of all those who are admitted
to it.

To the first of these I answer, That no Man can say, that either kneeling at the Holy Communion, or any other of the Rites or Ceremonies which we use at the Celebration of it, are sinful and unlawful; because it does not appear that God has any where *forbid* them. The utmost, then, that they can pretend, is only that they are improper and inconvenient. Now besides that others, who may be as good Judges, are of a different Opinion, I would desire to know, whether such things as are not sinful, but only improper and inconvenient, can be a sufficient Warrant to any Man to separate himself from the Communion of an Orthodox, established Church? If not, then they have no just Reason, upon this Account, to separate from us. But if they be, then I would farther demand, which is the greatest Inconveniency, to kneel at the Communion, or to make a Schism in the Church? And, of the two Inconveniencies, whether we ought not always to make Choice of the least?

To the other Objection I answer, That where any Man openly appears to be wicked and scandalous in his Life and Conversation, by the Discipline of our Church we are required to exclude such a Person from the Holy Communion, until he gives good Evidence of his Repentance and Reformation; but where nothing outwardly appears against a Man, who lives in the Profession of the true Religion, what have we to do to enquire into the Secrets of his Heart, for which he is accountable only to God? And if our Saviour *Christ* did not exclude even *Judas* himself from the Holy Communion, because, at that Time, he had done nothing openly; although *Christ* well knew that he had made a private Agreement with the Chief Priests to betray him; why should we

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take upon us to be more strict in this Matter? Or who has given us any Authority so to be?

And thus have I examined, and, I hope, sufficiently answered, all the Pretences which Men do ordinarily make for neglecting the Holy Communion. I have but this one thing to add, and I have done; namely, That as it is a great Sin to receive the Holy Communion unworthily, that is to say, without true Repentance; so certainly it is no less a Sin, to slight and neglect that Ordinance which *Christ* himself has expressly appointed and commanded, in Remembrance of that Death and Passion which he underwent for us. Let us therefore take the Matter into our serious Consideration, and whilst we are so very cautious to avoid the Danger on the one hand, let us not be so foolish as to run ourselves into as great a Hazard on the other. For as he who presumed to come to the Nuptial Feast, without a *Wedding-Garment*, was severely punished for his Presumption, *Matth. xxii. 13.* so they who neglected to come at all, and slighted the Invitation which was given them, were accounted as unworthy Persons, and received their Doom accordingly, *ver. 7, 8.*

A brief Account of the End and Design of the Holy Communion, the Obligation to receive it, the Way to prepare for it, and the Behaviour of ourselves both at, and after it.

IN a former Discourse, entituled, *An Answer to all the Excuses and Pretences, which Men ordinarily make for their not coming to the Holy Communion*, I have endeavoured to remove all those Obstacles, whether real or pretended, which to

many Men seem either wholly to stop their Way to God's Holy Table, or, at least, to render it very difficult and troublesome to be passed. If what I have therein said has had any Influence upon the Minds of well-meaning Men, so as to *incline* them, something more than formerly, to prepare themselves for the partaking of this sacred Ordinance; I hope, that what I am now about to offer, may both make them thoroughly sensible of the Obligation which lies upon them thereto, and also sufficiently instruct them in every thing which is necessary, in the Performance thereof, to render them worthy Receivers, and acceptable to Almighty God.

Five Things there are, which are very necessary to be understood by every one who would be thoroughly instructed and directed, in order to the receiving of the Holy Communion: namely, *First*, For what End and Purpose this Ordinance was instituted and appointed. *Secondly*, What Obligation lies upon every *Christian* to come and receive it. *Thirdly*, How often we, all of us, ought to partake of it. *Fourthly*, What Preparation is necessary, in order to it. And, *Lastly*, How we ought to behave ourselves both at, and after it: And altho' I have hinted many Things in my former Discourse above-mentioned, which might, in some sort, serve for an Answer to these Enquiries; yet because what is there spoken, which may relate to these Particulars, is only occasionally touched, and but just glanced at, I have thought it may not be improper a little more fully and methodically to handle them.

For the clearing of the first Point proposed, we must call to mind what the Holy Scripture so often declares to us; that our Blessed Saviour

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Jesus Christ died for us; that we are justified by his Blood, and saved from Wrath through him. And although we were once Enemies, are yet, upon our true Repentance, reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, Rom. v. 8, 9, 10. and thereby put into a Capacity of being made eternally happy in the Life to come. From whence it will follow, that as, in the first Place, it is the Duty of every Christian always to be thankful for, and never to forget, or be unmindful of so great a Favour and Benefit vouchsafed and offered to us; so, secondly, except a Man have an Interest in the Death and Passion of Christ, and is made a Partaker of the Merits of his Sufferings, and of that Propitiation which he thereby made for the Sins of the World, 1 John ii. 2. he can have no just Ground to hope for everlasting Salvation. That, therefore, both these Ends might the more effectually be obtained, and that all Christians might often, in a lively Manner, be put in Mind, and also, at the same Time, be made Partakers of the Merits of Christ's Death and Sufferings; this sacred Ordinance was appointed by him, both as the Commemoration of his Passion, and also the Communion of his Body and Blood. Thus the Apostle St. Paul tells us, what three of the Evangelists have also recorded, that the Lord Jesus, the same Night in which he was betrayed, took Bread, and when he had given Thanks, he brake it, saying, Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you; This do in Remembrance of me. After the same Manner he took the Cup, when he had supped, saying, This Cup is the new Testament in my Blood, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in Remembrance of me: For (says the Apostle in the same Place) as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's

Death till he come, 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c and the same *St. Paul* tells us, in the sixteenth Verse of the foregoing Chapter, that the *Cup of Blessing which we bless, is the Communion of the Blood of Christ; and the Bread which we break, the Communion of the Body of Christ*. From which Passages of Scripture it is obvious to collect, why this divine Institution is ordinarily called sometimes the *Lord's Supper*, and sometimes the *Holy Communion*.

Here then, we have a full and plain Answer to the first Thing proposed to be handled, namely, *For what End and Purpose this Ordinance was instituted and appointed*. It was appointed (as we may see) *First*, To put us in Remembrance of the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*: The Breaking of the Bread being put to represent the Crucifixion of his Body, and the Wine his Blood, which was shed for us; And, *Secondly*, That it might be to us not only the Commemoration, but also the *Communion* of the Body and Blood of *Christ*; that is to say, the Means which God has ordained, by the Use of which we do communicate in the Benefits of that Sacrifice which *Christ* offered, and in the Merits of that Death and Passion which he underwent in his *Body*, and by the shedding of his Blood for us; as I have already said in my former Discourse.

I come now to the second Thing proposed to be enquired into, namely, What Obligation lies upon every *Christian* to come and receive the Holy Communion.

And here, in the first Place, What Obligation can be stronger than the plain and positive Command of our Saviour *Christ* himself? Which he has laid upon us in as express Terms as can be, that we should *do this*; that is to say, *Eat of this Bread,*

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Bread, and drink of this Cup, in Remembrance of him, as we may find it in the Words just now quoted, 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. and that these Words were ever understood to contain in them a strict Command, perpetually binding all *Christians* to the Observation of it, most evidently appears, as well from the Context of that Chapter (from the twentieth Verse to the End) as from the constant great Care and Concern which the apostolick and primitive Church always shewed, in the maintaining and decent Celebration of this Ordinance.

But besides the bare Authority of our Saviour *Christ*, which alone is sufficient to lay an indispensable Obligation upon us, there are some collateral Circumstances and Considerations, which do add an extraordinary Weight and Force to this Command; as, namely, that it was given at that very Time, when he, who was our best Friend, and greatest Benefactor, was just ready to die, and lay down his Life for our Sakes; and not only so, but this Command was given us to be observed in Remembrance of him, and of that Death which he underwent for us.

If a dying *Friend* should, before his Departure out of the World, make any Request to me, which were not impossible or unreasonable in itself; I should think myself much wanting in that Friendship which I had professed to him, if I should omit or neglect to perform it. But if this Friend had been one, not of the common Sort, but a very great and extraordinary Benefactor to me; and if, beyond this, he were just going to lay down his Life for my sake; and, *Lastly*, if his Request were, that I would do something which might be a Means to keep me

always in *Remembrance* of him, and of what he had done for me: certainly I might well be accounted as one of the most barbarous and ungrateful Wretches that ever liv'd if I were not very careful most punctually to observe and fulfil whatever should thus be enjoined, and laid upon me. Now beside the Authority which our Saviour *Christ* has to lay an Obligation upon us; we, all of us, sure, must acknowledge, that he is our Friend, our greatest Friend, and chiefest Benefactor; and that it was for our Sakes, alone, that he underwent all his Sufferings, and yielded up his Life upon the Cross. And since he has made this Request, and left it as a Command unto all, who should believe in him, that *they should eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, in Remembrance of him*, and of what he had suffered for us; I would fain know, how any Man, who calls himself a *Christian*, can possibly be excused from the greatest Ingratitude, as well as Disobedience, if he neglects to do what he thus appears to be so strongly and doubly obliged to? And with what Confidence can he hope to be saved by the Merits and Passion of *Christ*, whilst he refuses or neglects to commemorate his Death and Sufferings, in that manner which *Christ* himself has appointed?

And thus, I think, we have a sufficient Answer to the second Thing proposed, namely, What Obligation lies upon every *Christian* to receive the Holy Communion? We are plainly obliged to do it, *First*, in Point of *Duty*; because we are thereunto expressly commanded by *Christ Jesus* our Saviour: And, *Secondly*, in Point of *Gratitude*; because this Injunction was laid-upon us by our best Friend, and greatest Benefactor, when he was just ready to lay down his

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Life for us, that it might serve as a Means to keep up in his Church a *lively Remembrance* of him, and of his great Love to us for ever.

I proceed, then, to the third Thing proposed to be handled, namely, How often we, all of us, ought to partake of the Holy Communion. The Answer to which Question is briefly and plainly this, *viz.* That every sincere *Christian* is obliged to *partake of the Holy Communion as often as he has Opportunity for it.* The Truth of which Assertion, I think, will appear beyond all Manner of Exception, from these two following Considerations.

First I suppose it will easily be granted, that whosoever is an honest and *sincere Christian*, ought not to let slip any Opportunity that is fairly offered him of expressing his Thankfulness to Almighty God for that infinite Mercy vouchsafed unto Mankind, in our Redemption by the Death and Passion of our blessed Lord and Saviour: For he that is wanting in his Thankfulness to God for so inestimable a Benefit, thereby plainly demonstrates, that he is not thoroughly sincere in his *Christianity*, which indispensably obliges him to this Duty. Now that the devout Participation of the Holy Communion is one very fit and proper Way of expressing our Thanks and Acknowledgments to God for our Redemption, by the Sufferings and Death of *Christ* (for the thankful Commemoration whereof the very Ordinance was appointed) is so very plain, that no Man, I think, who owns the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and is not misled by false and enthusiastick Notions, can deny or so much as doubt of it. From whence it must needs follow, that he who has a fair Opportunity of receiving the Holy Communion, and yet neglects to partake of it,

it, is deficient in the Expression of his Thankfulness to God; and consequently is not sufficiently sincere in that *Christianity* which he professes.

Secondly, Whosoever has an Opportunity offered him of doing a good Act, and has no just Reason or Excuse for his not doing of it, is certainly bound and obliged to do it, according to the Opportunity which is so offered. Now that to participate of the Holy Communion is a good Act, I have already shewn, in that I have proved it to be our Duty; and that there can be no such Thing as a just Excuse or Reason for not partaking of it, I have proved at large in my former Discourse; in which I have fully answered all manner of Pretences of this Nature. The Consequence, then, must be, that whosoever has an Opportunity of receiving the Holy Communion, and yet neglects to receive it, is most evidently guilty of a Failure in his *Christian Duty*.

But here, perhaps, I shall be told, That sometimes 'tis possible an Opportunity for receiving the Holy Communion may offer itself, when a Man is not duly prepared for it; and therefore ought not to partake of it. To which I answer, That he who is a sincere *Christian* ought never to be unprepared for this Holy Ordinance, which will evidently appear from what I have to say upon

The *Fourth* Thing proposed to be handled, namely, What Preparation is necessary in order to the receiving of the Holy Communion.

Now to this Holy Ordinance (and indeed to all solemn Acts of Devotion) a two-fold Preparation is necessary; *First*, a general; and, *Secondly*, a particular one. I call that a *general Preparation*, which *always* ought to be making, and is not the Work of a few Hours only, but should be

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the main Business of every Man's whole Life. And that I call a *particular Preparation*, which is then more especially to be made, whenever we are upon thus approaching to God, and have a particular Design of coming to his Holy Table.

The general Preparation, then, which is necessary for every Man that would come with Acceptance to the Holy Communion, is Repentance for his past Sins, together with a virtuous and holy Life; in all Points agreeable unto the Laws of God, (I mean, to the best of his Power) and never *wilfully* or *habitually* straying away from those Rules and Precepts, which are prescribed to us in the Gospel. For he who having not repented of his Sins, but living still in the *wilful* Practice of any of them, or the *known* Neglect of any Duty, shall offer to approach unto God in any Act of Devotion whatsoever, is so far from doing a thing which is acceptable to him, that, on the contrary, God has expressed the greatest Abhorrence that well can be, unto all such Worship or Service as this: *The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination unto the Lord*, Prov. xv. 8. And again, *He that turneth away his Ear from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be an Abomination*, xxviii. 9. besides a Multitude of other Texts that might be quoted to the same Purpose. And here we must ever remember what the Apostle St. *James* tells us, chap. ii. 10. and what in itself also is most highly rational, namely, that *whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet [wilfully] offend in any one Point*, (and continue therein without Repentance) *is guilty of all*: For (according to the Apostle's Reasoning in the next Verse) since the same God, who forbids one Sin, has also forbid all others; he who wilfully persists in any one Sin, whatever it be, plainly despises

despises the very Authority of God, and thereby as much as in him lies, undermines the very Foundation of his whole Law.

I will not, then, stand to dispute how those words of St. Paul are to be interpreted; that *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself*, 1 Cor. xii. 29. but this I take to be as plain, both from Reason and Scripture, as such a Thing can be; that not only he who comes to the Holy Communion, but who dares to offer up his Prayers to God, while he wilfully persists in any known Sin, or the Neglect of any known Duty, is guilty of a very great Affront to the Divine Majesty. To come to the Marriage-Feast without a *Wedding-Garment*, was resented as a high Contempt of the King who made the Invitation, *Matth. xxii. 12, 13*. And to bow the Knee to Christ, and cry, *Hail, King of the Jews!* at the same time when they spit on him, and smote him on the Head, was nothing but a redoubling of their Mockery, *Matth. xxvii. 29, 30*. And I appeal to the common Sense of every Man, whether he is not guilty of the very same sort of Practice towards Almighty God, who bends his Knees, or shews outward Signs of Reverence to him in Prayers, or at the Holy Communion, while his Heart and Affections are not truly bent to serve and obey him in all his Actions: but he, on the contrary, lives in an habitual Violation of his Laws, and a continued Contempt of his Power and Authority?

But besides this, which I call a *general Preparation*, there is also a more particular Preparation, which is very proper, and ordinarily necessary, in order to the Reception of the Holy Communion, which the Apostle St. Paul tells us is *Self-Examination*: *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him*

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him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup, says he, 1 Cor. xi. 28. that is, in other Terms, that whenever a Man designs to present himself at God's Holy Table, he ought, before-hand, seriously to call himself to an Account, whether or no he be so qualified, as to be acceptable to God when he comes there; that is to say, whether or no he really and truly has that *general Preparation*, of which I have been just now speaking, and without which he ought not to come. For if such an Enquiry as this be not often, and carefully made, the Filth and Pollution of Sin will, by little and little, in a manner, almost insensibly cleave again to our Souls, till, by Degrees, it destroys, and takes away that *general Preparation* which ought always to be kept, and maintained by us. Whilst we sometimes *slumber or sleep*, our *Lamps* will be apt to burn dim; and therefore must be new *trimmed*, at our going out to *meet the Bridegroom*, Matth. xxv. 5, 6, 7. and when we have put on the *Wedding-Garment*, Matth. xxii. 12. it is yet very fit, that, as often as we come to the Marriage-Feast, we should examine, and take a careful View of our Dress, for fear it should have contracted some Spot or Defilement.

But here, perhaps, it will be demanded, Is this all the Preparation that is necessary to the receiving of the Holy Communion; that a Man should lead a virtuous and *Christian* Life, and not be conscious to himself (upon the Examination of his Conscience) that he continues in any unrepented Sin? Is it not absolutely necessary, that, upon every such Occasion as this, he should run through the whole Catalogue of Sins, and examine himself particularly upon every one of them, with all their Circumstances and Aggravations? And ought not he also, for some Days before-hand,

to sequester himself from all worldly Business whatsoever, and to spend his Time only in Prayer, Meditation, Reading, and such like Acts of Devotion?

That honest and lawful Business is never to be reckoned as a Hindrance from the Holy Communion, I have shewn in a former Discourse. And to the rest of what is here urged, I answer, That such a strict and particular Examination of our Conscience is undoubtedly sometimes the Duty of every Man: For except we thus *search and try our Ways*, that we may clearly discern wherein we have gone astray, we shall not be able to *turn again to the Lord*, as we ought to do, *Lam. iii. 40.* nor do I think, that any Time can be more proper and convenient for this, than when we are about to approach unto God's Table; that some suitable Prayers, and proper Meditations also, ought to be used upon such an Occasion as this (as indeed, upon every particular Occasion whatsoever that is of any considerable Moment) every Man's own Reason must tell him, is a Part of his *Christian Duty*. But that every Time he receives the Holy Communion he should thus nicely examine himself, if there be not some other particular Reason for it; and that so much Time extraordinary should always before-hand be spent in Prayer and Meditation, more than at other Seasons, is what I can find no Argument, either from Reason or Scripture, to prove necessary. It is beyond Dispute that the primitive *Christians* did every Lord's Day (if not oftener) receive the Holy Communion: and if they had thought themselves obliged to spend so much time always in particular Preparation, as some Men seem to think necessary, it would scarce have been possible for them to have had sufficient Leisure from

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their Devotions, to have followed the Business of their Callings, to get a Livelihood for themselves and their Families. And those extraordinary long Exercises of Prayer, Reading, and Meditation, which some do require, by way of Preparation to this Ordinance; as they do affright and keep away many from it, who find that they are not well able to go through with them; so is the Performance of them such a tiresome thing to others, that it often makes them heavy, and unapt even for their ordinary Devotions, for some time after they have received the Holy Communion. And therefore, for the Reader's better Satisfaction and Direction, I have, at the End of this Discourse, set down a few short Rules how we ought always to prepare ourselves for the receiving of it.

I come now to the last Thing proposed to be touched on, namely, how we ought to behave ourselves both at, and after the Holy Communion; in which the very Nature and Design of the Ordinance itself will be a most plain and clear Direction to us. For since the Intent of it is not only a solemn and perpetual Commemoration of the Death of *Christ*, but also the Communion or Participation of the Merits of his Passion (as I have already shewn) it will follow, *First*, That at this Office we ought to behave ourselves with a suitable Seriousness, Attention, and Reverence: And, *Secondly*, That after it we ought to return most humble Thanks to Almighty God, for the great Benefits which he is pleased to vouchsafe unto us by it. For our more particular Direction wherein, I have to this Discourse subjoined some short Rules, Prayers, and Meditations, which I take to be proper to the Occasion, and, I hope, may prove useful to those of an ordinary Capacity,

city, for whom this small Work is chiefly designed; to which therefore, I refer the Reader, without adding here any more upon this Point.

Brief Rules for Preparation for the Holy Communion, and Behaviour both at, and after it; with short Prayers and Meditations suitable to that Occasion.

Of general Preparation.

HE that would maintain and keep himself in a constant *general Preparation* for the Holy Communion, so as always to be fit, upon the shortest Notice, to partake of it, (which certainly every *Christian* ought ever to endeavour after) must be careful in the Observation of these following Rules:

1. He must be diligent in his Endeavours to know and understand all the several Parts and Branches of his Duty to God, to all other Men, and to himself; for which End he must be careful to make the best Use he can of all those Means of Instruction and Knowledge which God has put into his Power; such as reading the Holy Scriptures, and other good Books, or hearing them read; attending upon the publick Offices of Preaching, Catechizing, and the like, *Prov. iv. 5. John v. 39. 2 Tim. iii. 15. John xiii. 17.*

2. He must, upon all Occasions, be industrious and zealous in the avoiding of every Sin, and the Practice and Performance of every Duty, according to his Ability and Opportunity for the same, *Tit. ii. 11,—14. Matth. vii. 21. Luke xii. 47.*

3. He must very often think and meditate upon his Ways, and all his particular Practices, and
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examine whether or no they are agreeable to the Rules of his Duty; that wheresoever he finds he has been deficient or done amiss, he may take the better Care to rectify and amend it for the Time to come, *Psal.* iv. 4. and cxix. 59. *Lam.* iii. 40.

For which End and Purpose I recommend this following easy, but very profitable Task, which I would have every Man constantly to impose upon himself; namely, two or three times in the Course of each Day, to carry his Thoughts back, and seriously consider what he has that Day been doing, and how he has spent his Time, from the very Minute that he first awaken'd from Sleep. As for Example, When first I awaked, did I think upon God, and recommend myself to his Almighty Care and Protection? Or did not worldly, or, it may be, sinful Thoughts first take Possession of my Heart? Again, I was lately in such or such Company; how, and after what manner, did I behave myself? Were all my Words and Actions innocent, modest, and decent? Did I give no Offence to God, or Scandal to the World, by any thing which there I either said or did? &c. Such Questions as these, if we could constantly and seriously put home to our Consciences, while things remain *fresh in our Memories*, it is evident what a mighty Influence it would have upon us, to restrain us from Evil, and excite us to do that which is Good.

Of Particular Preparation.

I. Whenever Notice is given of the Celebration of the Holy Communion, let every sincere and devout *Christian* immediately resolve, by no Means to miss that Opportunity of commemorating the Sufferings, and communicating in the Merits of his Blessed Lord and Saviour.

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II. And in the midst of all his Business, (in the meantime) let him very often call to Mind, that such a Day he must not be absent from God's Holy Table, and therefore must be very careful not to do any thing which may render him unfit for it.

III. At some Seasons it is very necessary that every Man should set a little Time apart for the more strict and particular Examination of his Conscience; for which End and Purpose I earnestly recommend that Catalogue of Sins which is drawn up at the End of that excellent Book *The whole Duty of Man*, which I would have every Man very distinctly to go over; and upon every Particular to recollect his Actions, and ask his Conscience, *Have I been guilty of this?*

IV. But where a Man very often receives the Communion, and never misses any Opportunity for it; I do not conceive that such a particular Examination is every Time absolutely necessary; nor have all Men, at all Times, Leisure enough for it. But however, ordinarily, I think no Man ought to receive the Holy Communion without some previous Examination of himself. For the more easy and regular Performance of which, I would have it remembered, that the whole Duty of a *Christian* is reducible to these three Heads, *Matth. xxii. 37, &c.*

1. To love God in the highest Degree.
2. Sincerely (and not corruptly or sensually) to love himself.
3. To love every Man with the same sort of Love (though not in the same Degree) as he loves himself.

V. Every Time, then, that a Man receives the Holy Communion, I would have him before-hand, seriously to put at least these three Questions home to his Conscience:

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1. Do I really and truly love God above all Things? and do I effectually shew this my Love, by a due Honour and Respect to him in all my Thoughts, Words, and Actions?
2. Have I a sincere and upright Love for myself? That is, do I love my Soul better than my Body? And am I more heartily concerned to secure my everlasting Happiness in the World to come, than to compass my Pleasure or Profit in this Life?
3. Have I a real and sincere Love for all Mankind without Exception? And do I effectually shew this my Love, by hurting no Man by Word or Deed (where I can possibly avoid it) and by being ready to do Good to every Man whatsoever, in all Ways, and upon all Occasions, wherever I have Ability and Opportunity?

And, if these three Questions are but *seriously* meditated upon *for a little Time*, there is scarce any Sin that a Man has been guilty of, but they will point it out to him.

VI. When a Man, by the Examination of his Conscience, has set his Sins full in his View, then let him insert, into his ordinary Devotions, this, or some such like Confession of them, to God.

O Most gracious God! I, thy unworthy Creature, here humbly acknowledge my Sins before thee. And, besides those which I have now recollected, I cannot but own, that I lie under the Guilt of many more Transgressions, altho' I am not able to recount, or remember them. Nor can I deny, but that I have committed many Sins, even contrary to the Motions of thy Grace, and the Light and Conviction of my own Conscience; and therefore do most justly deserve the Severity of thy Wrath and Indignation

nation against me. But, Lord, I fly unto thee for Mercy; for the sake of Christ Jesus, our blessed Redeemer, be merciful unto me in the Pardon of all my Sins, known and unknown; and so guide and assist me by thy good Grace, that, for the Time to come, I may be duly careful to abstain from every evil Thing, may grow in Grace, and be zealous of good Works, and maintain a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

To which let him add this short Prayer:

MOST merciful God, who hast given thine only Son Jesus Christ to die for our Sins: Grant me thy Grace, I humbly beseech thee, that I may never be unmindful, but always truly thankful for that inestimable Benefit vouchsafed unto me by his Death and Sufferings; and so fit and prepare me, O Lord, by the Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that both at this, and all other Times, I may be rightly qualified to commemorate the Passion of my blessed Redeemer, in that holy Ordinance which he has appointed; and also thereby effectually to partake of that Redemption which he has wrought for all Mankind, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Of Behaviour at, and after the Holy Communion.

1. At the Holy Communion, and at all other Times in the Worship of God, let every Man strive, as much as he can, to keep his Mind intent and fixed upon what he is about, and to lay aside not only all wicked Thoughts, but also all such as are impertinent to the present Business.

2. Let him also take Care to behave himself with that outward Decency and Composedness, as may be a sufficient Token of that inward Devotion and Reverence which he bears in his Heart,
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without gazing about, or any way unnecessarily moving his Body, or whispering to any one that is near him, or the like.

3. While the Service is performing, let him all along join with the Minister and Congregation, with his Heart and Thoughts lifted up to God, and with his Tongue too, where the Liturgy requires that any thing should be spoken aloud by the People; as in the Responses, the Confession, the Lord's Prayer and the Doxology.

4. But let him take Care, likewise, to avoid all manner of Affectation, and not to behave himself in such a manner, as if he had a Mind to be taken Notice of for a Person of extraordinary Devotion. For which Reason, whatever private Prayers, or Meditations, he may have to offer to God, let him put them up in his Thoughts alone, and let not his Voice be heard, but when the publick Office requires it.

5. When he has received the Bread, let him offer up this, or some such short Ejaculation, to God:

O good God! grant that, by the Sufferings of my dear Saviour, who was crucified for me, I may escape eternal Sufferings, and be made Partaker of everlasting Glory.

And when he has received the Cup, let him in his Heart thus say:

O gracious God! grant that, by the shedding of the Blood of thy dear Son, I may obtain the Remission of all my Sins.

6. While the Bread and Wine are distributing to the rest of the Congregation, let him entertain himself with such sort of Meditations and Prayers as these.

1. Let him again bethink himself what those Sins are, to which he has been most inclined; and let

let him, in the Presence of God, seriously and stedfastly renew his Resolutions of being careful to abstain from them for the time to come.

2. Let him also consider, what Opportunities he ordinarily has for the doing of any good Works, and let him stedfastly purpose ever hereafter to be diligent in making use of them.

And let him hereunto add the following short Prayer:

*M*erciful God, assist me with thy Grace and Holy Spirit, that I may always keep those Vows and good Resolutions, which thou hast enabled me to make; that I may never return to any of my former Sins, but ever hereafter serve thee faithfully in the constant Practice of Virtue and Religion, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. And here let him express his Charity, by putting up a Prayer for all Mankind, in this or the like Form:

*L*ord, if it be thy gracious Will, extend thy Mercy and Compassion unto all Mankind. Enlighten the Minds of those that are ignorant, and move the Wills of those that are obstinate, that they may all receive thy holy Truth, and carefully live in the Practice of it. Pardon all my Enemies, O Lord, and bring them, and all of us, all the World over, to true Repentance, that we may all live holily and righteously here; and may, in the End, be happy with thee hereafter, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

5. And then let him entertain himself with reading and meditating upon some select Portions of the Holy Scripture, until such Time as the Minister is ready to proceed with the publick Office. I need not here transcribe any particular Texts, but will leave every Man to make Choice of such as are most agreeable to him; only if he be at a

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Loss, let him read the Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm, where he shall easily find proper Matter enough to employ his devoutest Thoughts upon this Occasion.

6. When the Service is ended, and the Congregation dismissed, let him depart to his Home, or Place of Abode, and as soon as he has a convenient Opportunity of retiring into some private Place, let him first look back, and consider whether or no, in the Performance of this holy Office, which he has so lately been at, he has behaved himself in all Things as he ought to have done; and if he finds that he has been any way short or defective therein, let him resolve to take a better Care for the Time to come.

7. And then let him conclude with this, or the like Prayer:

Lord, I desire to return my most humble and hearty Thanks to thee, for all thy Blessings, both spiritual and temporal, which thou hast vouchsafed to me. At this Time, particularly, I praise and bless thy holy Name, for that Opportunity which thou hast this Day given me of commemorating the Death and Passion of my blessed Redeemer, and also of partaking of his Merits in the Participation of that holy Ordinance which he has appointed. Lord, pardon all the Weaknesses and Defects which I have been guilty of in the Performance of that great Duty. And assist me with thy Grace, I beseech thee, that in the whole Course of my Life I may ever be careful to fulfil and perform those Vows and Resolutions which I have made to thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

8. And, last of all, Let him never, as long as he lives, be forgetful of what he has thought, and said, and done, both before, and at the Holy Communion: But let the Remembrance of it be a constant Restraint upon him from all manner of Wickedness;

48 *An Answer to all Excuses, &c.*

Wickedness; and let him, upon the Assault of any Temptation, thus bethink himself:

At such a Time I received the Holy Communion, and then I seriously resolved, and solemnly promised to Almighty God, that I would heartily endeavour, in all Points, to live like a Christian. Shall I then upon any account, cheat, lie, curse, swear, talk profanely or obscenely, or the like? No, God forbid! I have engaged myself to God to be another sort of a Man; and what can I expect but Wrath and Indignation from him, if knowingly and wilfully I should violate those Promises which I so deliberately and stedfastly made to him?

T H E E N D.

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THE
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 TO
 ETERNAL SALVATION
 Plainly pointed out.

By the most Reverend Dr. EDWARD
 SYNGE, late Lord Archbishop of TUAM,
 in *Ireland*.

One Thing is needful. Luke, x. 42.

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IN this short Discourse, I have endeavour'd to bring the noblest Argument, that can employ the Mind of Man, within a small Compass; and yet to set it in a clear Light. Nor shall I make any other Apology for the Publication of it, but only that I hope it may be of good Use, at least to such as want Money to buy, or Leisure to read larger Volumes upon the same Subject.

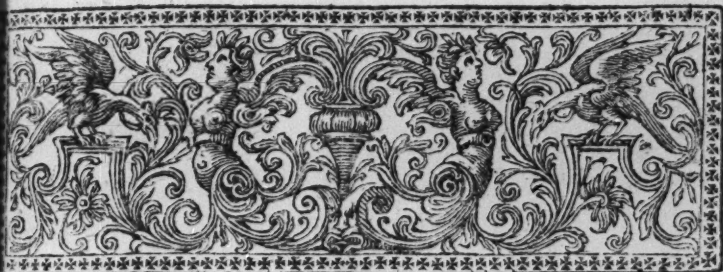


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I THESS. V. 21.

Prove all Things: Hold fast that which is good.



At the twelfth Verse of this Chapter the Apostle lays down certain Rules of Christian Piety, in distinct Sentences; having no Occasion to connect them one with the other. Of these Sentences

my Text is one, of very great Concern to us all (as we shall presently see) and therefore carefully to be look'd into.

Prove all Things, says the Text: Under which Expression we are not to include the Affairs and Business of this World. For altho', in Prudence, a Man ought to make some *Proof* even of such Things as these, before he engages himself in them; yet these are not the Things of which St. *Paul* is here speaking, but only of the Things of Religion; the Things upon which our eternal Salvation depends: These are the Things which he directs us to try, examine, and *prove*.

Again; *Hold fast that which is good*, says the Apostle. By *that which is good* he means only that which is agreeable and conformable to the Will of God, which, in Matters of Religion, is the only Rule of good to us. To the same Purpose he speaks, *Rom. xii. 2.* where he directs us to *prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God.* Also *Eph. v. 8.* *Walk as Children of Light, proving what is acceptable to the Lord*, and ver. 17. *Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the Will of the Lord is.*

From the Text, thus explained, these two Propositions must evidently arise.

First,

First, That it is the Duty of every Man to search, examine, and enquire into Matters of Religion, until such Time as he finds it *proved* to the Satisfaction of his Conscience, what the will of God is, which he stands obliged to perform and fulfil.

Secondly, That when he is convinced what the Will of God is, he ought to *hold fast* to it, and by no Means to depart from it. *Prove all Things: Hold fast that which is good:* That is to say, that which is agreeable to the Will of God.

First then, It is the Duty of every Man to search, examine, and enquire into Matters of Religion, until such Time as he finds it *proved*, to the Satisfaction of his Conscience, what the Will of God is, which he stands obliged to perform and fulfil. And that this is so, there will need no other Argument to prove but this alone, That it is God's Command to every Man thus to do. Which will manifestly appear both from Reason and *Holy Scripture*.

First, from *Reason*. Man is a rational Creature, endowed with Understanding, whereby we are enabled to distinguish between good and evil, that we may approve and choose the one, and reject and disapprove the other. As then St. Paul puts

this Question, *Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?* that is to say, from the Hand of God: 1 Cor. iv. 7. So let us in like manner demand from our selves, who made us to differ from the Beasts that perish? Who *breathed into Man's Nostrils the Breath of Life*, whereby Man is become a *living Soul*? Gen. ii. 7. Who is it that has given us Reason and Understanding whereby we are more distinguished from Brutish Animals than by our bodily Shape? Is not all this owing intirely to the good Will and Pleasure of our great Creator?

For what End and Purpose then has God made us *rational* Creatures? Is it only that we should employ our *Reason* about the short and transitory Things of this World, and that we should struggle and contend with one another about them? Has not he made us capable of looking up to him that created us? Of honouring, adoring, and worshipping him, and of enquiring into his holy Will? And is not this a plain Command, signified to us by our own *Reason*, that we should accordingly so do? In a Word, that Man must wholly lay aside his *Reason*, who does not think it his Duty to employ it in inquiring after the Will of God, to the intent that he

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may perform it; wherein all Religion entirely consists.

And therefore St. Paul pronounces the Heathen World to be *without Excuse*; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God. They had some competent Knowledge of God even by their own natural Reason: Because (as the Apostle speaks) that which may be made known of God was manifested in them: For God had shewed it unto them. For the invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead, Rom. i. 19, 20. But the Heathens did not improve this Knowledge as they ought to have done, to the Glory of God. They did not carefully enquire after the Will of God; in which sober Reason would have guided them a great Way; but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened: As it immediately follows.

Thus we may see that Reason, of it self, teaches it to be God's Command that we should diligently enquire after his Will: And the same thing is also enforced upon us by the *Holy Scriptures*. What can be more plain to this purpose than the Words of my Text? *Prove all Things; hold fast that*

that which is good. Thus also speaks *St. John*, 1 Joh. iv. 1. *Beloved, believe not every Spirit; but try the Spirits whether they are of God; because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.* And according to the Church of *Ephesus* is commended for trying them which said they were *Apostles* and were not, and finding them *Lyars*, Rev. ii. 2. *Search the Scriptures: For in them ye think ye have eternal Life; says Christ, John v. 39.* And the *Bereans* are approved of for not taking their Religion blindly upon trust, but searching the *Scriptures* daily whether those Things were so, Act. xvii. 11. Our Blessed Saviour puts all Men upon judging for themselves (which always presupposes a proper Enquiry) *Yea and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* Luke, xii. 57. And, to add no more Proofs from *Scripture* in so plain a Case, *St. Peter* directs all Christians to be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Which it is impossible for any Man to do, except he first makes a serious Enquiry into the Will of God, and the Truth of Religion.

Having thus plainly, both from *Reason* and *Scripture*, laid this great and fundamental Command of God before you, that we ought

ought, every one of us, to search and inquire what his Will is; as a faithful Servant ought to do into that of his Master; let me add this one Consideration, that our Obedience to this Command is of the greatest Moment and Importance to each of us, that any thing can possibly be.

Our Blessed Saviour observes that when a Man *intends to build a Tower he sits down first and counts the Cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it*, Luke, xiv. 28. Or if a King goes to make War against another King; *he first consulteth whether he be able to meet him in the Field*, ver. 31. Indeed in all Matters of great Consequence, a Man of common Prudence will not fail to consider beforehand what is most proper to be done; lest, when it is too late, he should find himself disappointed in his Expectation, and perhaps very much damnified. Now what can possibly be of greater Consequence, Moment, or Importance to us all than to know the Will of God? Upon the due Performance of which the Peace of our Consciences here, and our eternal Happiness hereafter intirely depend. If then, in the momentary Affairs and Business of this World, we think our selves obliged to make the best Use of our Reason and Understanding, that we may not be deceived
to

to our Damage or Prejudice; certainly much more ought we so to do, when that which of all things, is, or ought to be, most valuable to us, is in danger of being lost by our Neglect.

But here it is objected, that to make a full Enquiry into Religion, with the Grounds and Reasons of each Part of it wherein the Will of God with Regard to us is contained, is a Thing of great Difficulty, and not to be undertaken by any but a Man of Learning: And since upon this single Consideration the generality of the Church of *Rome* are persuaded to make no Enquiry at all into Religion, but to take it on Trust from their Church, or rather most of them upon the Credit of their Priests: I think a clear and full Answer ought to be given to this Objection.

Let us then for the present suppose it to be very *Difficult* to make an Enquiry into Religion: Is this a sufficient Reason for our not doing it, when God has commanded it? It is *difficult* for us, who carry Flesh and Blood about us, to keep our Passions in Subjection to Reason and Religion, and to mortify and subdue all our evil Inclinations; and yet there is no sober Man who does not own this to be his Duty. More *difficult* it would be to expose our selves to Persecu-

tion.

on, and even to Death, for the Sake of Religion and a good Conscience: And yet God, in his Providence, should call us to this, there is no sincere Christian who will not acknowledge that he ought willingly to submit to it. *Difficulty* then is no just excuse for our not obeying any Command of God; as I have shewn it to be that every Man should make diligent Enquiry into his Will, or into Matters of Religion, wherein it is contained.

But, at once to take off the whole Force of this Objection, it is very plain that a full and satisfactory Enquiry into Religion, as far as we are concerned to know it, is so far from being *difficult*, that it is very easy to be made by every one, even of a mean Capacity, who with moderate Diligence and Attention will set himself to it. And because this is a Point of the highest Importance, I shall crave your Patience, whilst I chiefly set it in a full and clear Light.

The only End and Design of God, in making Religion known to Mankind, is that we might live holily here, and be eternally happy hereafter. *This is the Will of God, in your Sanctification, 1 Thess. iv. 3. and the Gospel of Christ is the Power of God to Salvation, Rom. i. 16.* Whatever Doctrines then are advanced by any Man, under

der the Pretence of Religion, if they have no Tendency toward making us holy in this Life, or happy in that which is to come. Religion (properly speaking) is not at all concerned in them ; nor is any Man obliged to enquire into the Truth of them. *Follow youthful Lusts ; but follow after Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart,* says St. Paul : All such Questions as have no Tendency hereunto, he brands with the Name of *foolish and unlearned*, and directs us to *avoid* them, *knowing that they do generate Strifes*, 2 Tim. ii. 22. 23.

Turn over that vast Multitude of great and small Volumes of controversial Divinity (as it is called) with which learned Men have troubled the Christian Church ; and you will find them full fraught with barren Speculation, *Strifes of Words*, (1 Tim. vi. 4.) *which minister Questions rather than godly Edifying which is in Faith* : To which Sort of Things the Apostle directs us *not to give Heed*, 1 Tim. i. 4.

These are the Things which seem to perplex Religion, and to make it difficult to know *what the Will of the Lord is*, (Eph. v. 17.) But if we lay them all at once aside, as St. Paul directs us ; we may plainly see that all the Knowledge of Religion that is necessary

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necessary to make us holy, and, in Consequence thereof, eternally happy, entirely consists in these three Things. First, that we be fully persuaded of the Being of God; which is the first Principle and Foundation of all Religion: Secondly, that we be convinced of the Truth of that Religion which was taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles; without which we cannot be Christians: And, thirdly, that we be rightly informed what it is which God requires from us, according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in order to our Salvation. *This is Life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, Joh. xvii. 3.* He that is sufficiently instructed in these three Things, and leads his Life according to them, can want no Knowledge that is necessary to make him a good Christian, and bring him to eternal Salvation. And all this Knowledge may easily be attained unto by every Man of a common Capacity, who will but a little seek after it. *Seek and ye shall find, says Christ, Matt. vii. 7.* But if a Man will not be at a little Trouble in *seeking*, how is it possible for him to find what he would have.

First then, it is easy for such a Man to arrive at a full Persuasion touching the Being

ing of God. And indeed it is hard to suppose that any Man can look about him, or make the least Observation on the Structure of the whole World, and the many Sorts of Creatures contained in it, without being fully convinced of this great Truth.

Ask the most ignorant Man, who has not quite lost his Reason, who it was that made the *Clock*, which points out the Hour of the Day and Night to him? And he will readily tell you it was made by some *Clock-maker*; and that if there had not been such an *Artist* both to contrive and frame it, there never could have been any such Thing as a *Clock*.

Let him, in like Manner, ask himself, Who made the whole Universe, and every Thing therein? Who made the Sun, Moon, and Stars, to mark out for us the Day for Labour, the Night for Rest, and the several Seasons of the Year, for tilling of the Ground, and saving the Fruits of it? Who gave the Earth Power to bring forth Grass, Herbs and Trees for the use both of Man and Beast? Who placed the Earth at such an exact Distance from the Sun, as to be cherished by its Heat, and yet not burnt up by it? Who gives to all living Creatures power to receive the Nourishment fitted for them, and to propagate their Kind,

that the Earth may not be laid waste and made desolate? Who gives unto Man a rational Soul, and endows him with proper Faculties, whereby to make use of the Creatures put within his Power for his Support and Comfort? And, lastly, who is it that, for so many thousand Years, has kept, and still does keep all these Things in that exact Order wherein they have so long continued? Many more plain Questions might be added to these: But if a Man seriously puts these alone to himself (which one of a mean Capacity may easily do) his own Reason must presently convince him that, if so poor a Thing as a *Clock*, or any other Engine, could not be without an *Artist* to contrive and fashion it, much less could there be so glorious a Structure as the whole Universe (in every Part of which there is so much Art and Contrivance) if there were not a most wise and powerful God to frame it, and put it in that Order wherein we find it. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God; and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work: Psal. xix. 1. And the invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead, Rom. i. 20.*

Secondly, It is easy for a Man of a mean Capacity, with a little attentive Enquiry,

to become well convinced of the Truth of the Christian Religion.

The most illiterate Man who converses at all among his Neighbours, either does, or easily may, upon very good Grounds, believe many Things that are recorded in the Histories of past Times. Who (for Example) has the least Doubt but that there were such Persons as King *Henry* the Eighth, Queen *Elizabeth*, King *Charles* the First, and others, who sat upon the Throne of *England*? These Things are notorious, and no Man is so mad as to contradict them. Now, what is or can be more notorious in all History than the Miracles of Jesus Christ and his Apostles? They healed Multitudes of Sick People with a Word or a Touch; they gave Sight to the Blind, Hearing to the Deaf, and Strength and Agility to the Lame and Maimed. Christ Jesus walked upon the Water, and stilled the Tempest by his Command. He fed Multitudes with a very small Quantity of Provision. He cast out Devils, restored the Dead to Life, and rose himself from the Dead the third Day, after he had been crucified, and his Vitals pierced by a Spear. He conversed familiarly with his Disciples for forty Days after his Resurrection; and then was openly taken up into Heaven in their Sight, and soon after

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after, by sending the Holy Ghost upon them, he gave them Ability to speak all Languages; without which it had not been possible for them to preach the Gospel to all Nations.

All these Things, I say, are most notorious, and transmitted down to us in the History of the *New Testament*, by a Multitude of as faithful and unexceptionable Witnesses as ever gave, or could give Testimony to the Truth of any Fact whatsoever: Witnesses who could not hope to gain any Thing by their Testimony, if it were false; and suffered all manner of Persecution, and even Death itself with exquisite Torments for adhering to it: Which is known to have been the Case of the Apostles, and very many of the first Disciples of our Blessed Saviour: Of all which it is most easy for every Man with a little Enquiry, fully to inform himself.

Is not this then enough to convince any Man, who will but think of it, that they who were enabled to work so very many Miracles for the Confirmation of the Doctrine which they taught, had most certainly their Power and Authority from God? And consequently that the Religion, which was taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, is the true Religion? Our blessed Saviour ap-

peals to the miraculous Works so often done by him. *Though ye believe not me* (says he) *believe the Works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him,* Joh. x. 38.

And if to this we add, that the Christian Religion, in every Part of it, is most pure and holy, and agreeable to the Nature and Attributes of God (which is manifestly the Case, and will sufficiently appear from the short Draught of it which, by and by, I shall have occasion to make) it will much strengthen the Argument, beyond any pretence of an Answer.

Thirdly, It is easy for a Man of a common Capacity to get sufficient Information touching all that God, according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, requires from us in order to our Salvation.

Indeed, if he resolves to perplex his Mind with those Niceties and Subtilties, those *foolish and unlearned Questions*, which I have shewn you St. Paul directs us to avoid, and give no heed to, he will soon bring himself into an inextricable Labyrinth. But the direct Way to Salvation is very plain to be understood; and the only Difficulty of it is to unmortified Flesh and Blood to put it in practice. Hear what St. Paul says touching this Matter, Rom. x. 8. *The Word*

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is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth and in thy Heart; that is the Word of Faith which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved. Always provided that the Course of thy Life be answerable to this Belief; which, by the whole Tenor both of the Law and the Gospel, is ever to be understood.

The ceremonial and judicial Laws of Moses were only given to the People of Israel (whom God hath united into one civil, as well as sacred Society,) and are all of them now abolished under the Gospel. But God always did, and ever will, require, both from them and all other Nations, that they should strictly observe the Moral Law. He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Says the Prophet Micah; Chap. vi. 8. Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter: Fear God, and keep his Commandments: For this is the whole Duty of Man; says Solomon, Eccl. xii. 13. In every Nation, he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him; says St. Peter, Act. x. 35.

St. Paul

St. Paul represents the Sum and Substance of all that is necessary to Salvation, in these few and plain Words: *The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men: Teaching us that, denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present World: Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works,* Tit. ii. 11. Certainly God, who is infinitely Wise and Good, has given the Blessing of Religion to us his Servants, not to puzzle or perplex us, but to guide and direct us in the Performance of our Duty, if we will but give due Attention to it.

The whole Christian Religion is manifestly comprehended under these few Heads. “ To believe in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; in
“ whose name Christ has commanded all
“ who come into his Church to be baptized. To love God above all Things
“ and to shew our Love of him by keeping all his Commandments. To shew
“ Love and good Will to all Mankind, Friends, Strangers, and even Enemies,
“ as far as we have Ability and Opportunity.”

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 To worship God both publicly and
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 vation; not for any Merits of our
 own, but through the Mercy of God,
 and the Mediation of Jesus Christ our
 Blessed Saviour and Redeemer.

Too many there are and have been, who
 have mixed false or, at best, unnecessary
 Doctrines with their Religion: But this,
 which I have now recounted, is the Sum
 and

and Substance of the whole Christian Religion: And what is there in it all, that may not easily be known by every one who will but a little enquire into it? Indeed I may almost ask, what Man is there, who converses among Christians, that does not know all this already? Excepting such as, by shutting up the Eyes of their Understanding, have made themselves wilfully blind. Altho' perhaps one who is illiterate may not be able well to express the Sense which he has of it. Well, therefore, may I conclude that it is easy for a Man of a common Capacity to get sufficient Information touching all that God requires from us, under the Gospel, in order to our eternal Salvation.

It is indeed the Duty of every Man, according to his Ability, to improve his Notions of Religion, and to *grow in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ*, as *St. Peter* directs, 2 Pet. iii. 18. That, if possible, he may be qualified, *by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the Gainsayers*, Tit. i. 9. But a little Knowledge, if a Man can get no more, and conscientiously puts in practice what he knows, may be sufficient (through the Mercy of God) to bring him to Salvation.

Having

Having thus sufficiently cleared up my first Proposition, and shewn it to be the Duty of every Man to make the best Enquiry he can into Religion and the Will of God; as also how easy this Task is, even to a Man of a mean Capacity, if he honestly sets himself to it: I shall have occasion to say but little touching my second Proposition, which was

That when a Man is convinced what the Will of God is, he ought to hold fast to it, and by no means to depart from it.

This is a Truth universally acknowledged by all Men who own the Being of God: And therefore needs no farther Proof. God is our Creator; our supreme Lord and Master; by *His Will* alone we must stand or fall to all Eternity. As, therefore, it is our Duty to enquire after it; so it is both our Duty and Interest, when we have found it, to be obedient to it, and upon no account to depart from it. *Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith, without wavering. For he is faithful that promised,* says St. Paul, Heb. x. 23. *And we ought to obey God rather than Men;* say the Apostles, Acts v. 29. And so will every other Man say; although too many there are, who do not practise accordingly.

Let

Let us now see what Use we ought to make of the Doctrine which I have thus established from my Text.

First then, what shall we say of those Men, who are careful to enquire into every other thing that concerns them, and yet never make any Enquiry at all into the Truth of their Religion?

If a Man be about to make a Bargain, or to transact any worldly Business, he commonly considers whether what he is going to do will be for his Benefit, and whether he may do it with Safety. But although he owns that his eternal Happiness intirely depends upon the Truth of his Religion, yet why he is of that Religion which he professes, rather than of another, he is able to give no good Reason.

— One Sort of Men there is, who make it their avowed Profession never to search into the Grounds and Reasons of their Religion. But (say they) we believe as the Church believes, and we are safe. And if you ask them, how they know that their Church, upon which they depend, is the true Church, and that what they believe is as the Church believes? To this they have no other Answer to give, but that their Priests tell them so.

But, in the Affairs of this World, they will not rely upon the bare Credit and Authority of their Priests, who they well know may be mistaken; and why then should they do it when their eternal Salvation is at Stake? Why do not they consult their own Reason, and study the *Holy Scriptures*, untill they are fully satisfied whether those things which they learn from their Church, or rather from their Priests, are agreeable to the Will of God? No; they will not do this; but suffer themselves to be charmed and laid to sleep by the bare Name of *the Church*, altho' they know not what the Church is, and give themselves no farther Trouble about the Matter.

The *Holy Scriptures* are by all Christians owned as the Word of God: And in them being faithfully translated into many Languages) particularly in those of the *New Testament*, the Life, Miracles, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ are plainly set forth, together with that Doctrine of Salvation which he commanded his Disciples to teach; and for the doing of which, he gave them the Gift of the Holy Ghost: And St. *John* expressly tells us, that *These things are written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the*

Son of God; and that believing we might have Life through his Name, Joh. xx. 31. What an Infatuation then is it for any Man, who calls himself a *Christian*, to suffer himself to be kept a Stranger to this holy Book?

Others there are, who, although they have full and free Liberty of *searching the Scriptures*, and enquiring into the Grounds and ~~Reasons~~ of Religion, yet grossly neglect to do it. *Be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you;* says St. Peter, 1 Pet. iii. 15. But many there are, of both Sorts, who seek for no other Reason why they hope to be saved in the Religion which they profess, but only that thus they have been taught from their Infancy: Which Reason may as well be urged by a Turk or a Heathen as by them.

I have shewn it to be a Duty of the greatest Importance to every Man, that he should search and enquire into Religion and the Grounds of it; and also that this may be done, with very good Success by every Man even of a mean Capacity, who will but set himself to it with the same Care and Attention as he does to his worldly Business. That Man, therefore,

therefore, who neglects so to do, is forever left without any manner of Excuse.

Secondly, what shall we say of those Men, who have indeed a competent Knowledge of Religion; but yet do not form their Lives according to what they very well know?

Nothing can be plainer than that God requires from us all, that we should be *zealous of good Works*, diligent in the Practice of Piety, Justice, Charity, Compassion, Truth, Sobriety, Temperance, Modesty, Chastity in our Words and Actions, and every other Christian Vertue. Of all this none of us can pretend to be ignorant; and yet how many are there, who in their Practice are the very Reverse of it? Who never set themselves to *bold fast that which they know is good*, and most agreeable to the Will of God? As my Text directs us all to do. These Men are self-condemned, and therefore it is in vain to dispute with them. For, as our blessed Saviour says, *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead*, (Luke, xvi. 31.) So may we say, that if a Man will not hearken to the Dictates of his own Conscience, neither

will he regard what any other Man says to him.

But such Men ought to remember, that Christ has expressly told us, that *That Servant who knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes.* Luke, xii. 47. O that they were wise, that they understood this; that they would consider their latter End! as God, by Moses, says to the People of Israel, Deut. xxxii. 29.

Lastly, The Doctrine of my Text may be of great Use to us, when Men endeavour to perplex our Minds by attempting to persuade us that diverse things are necessary to Salvation, which really are not so.

For Example: The Church of Rome with great Assurance tells us that we cannot be saved, except we receive all those *Additions* which she (without any Authority but her own) has presumed to make to the Christian Religion. If a Man be convinced of the Truth of a Doctrine, he cannot but give his Assent to it: But if he be not so convinced, it is impossible he should believe it, what ever he may pretend; and God requires no Impossibilities from no Man.

My Text directs us that, when we have *proved all things*, we should *hold fast that which is good*. That is to say, whatever is conformable to the Will of God, whatever he has commanded and requires from us (the Sum and Substance of all which I have but now set before you) all this we ought to *hold fast*, and lead our Lives according to it, without bewildering ourselves with those things which are above our Capacity.

The Church of *Rome* takes very much upon herself, and Men of real or pretended Learning have advanced many Opinions of their own: But God alone, who is the sole Author and Giver of Salvation, has power to prescribe the Conditions of it: And if we honestly and sincerely perform what God has commanded (all which, I have shewn you, it is easy for every Man to learn) we are safe.

The Apostles of Christ themselves *had no Dominion over the Faith of Christians*, 2 Cor. i. 24. *I have not spoken of myself (says Jesus Christ) but the Father which sent me, he gave me a Commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that his Commandment is Life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak,*

Joh. xii. 49, 50. In like manner, Christ sent his Apostles *to teach Men to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them*, Matt. xxviii. 20. The Apostles were *faithful Stewards* of this Trust committed to them, 1 Cor. iv. 2. Wherever they preached the Gospel, they *kept back nothing that was profitable*, Acts xx. 20. but *declared all the Counsel of God*, ver. 27. Nor did they expect that what they taught should be received because it was the Doctrine of *Paul, Apollos, Cephas*, or any other Apostle; but purely and only because it was the Doctrine of *Christ*, 1 Cor. i. 12. For *Who is Paul, and Who is Apollos, but Ministers, by whom ye believed?* Chap. iii. 5. And when once the Apostles had preached the Gospel, *if they themselves, or an Angel from Heaven should have taught any other thing, as Gospel, than that which they had preached; let him be accursed;* says St. Paul, Gal. i. 8. Nor have we any authentic Account of what the Apostles taught or preached, except the *Holy Scriptures*. All this is most plain.

If therefore the *Romanists* would have us receive their Doctrines of Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the giving Divine Worship to the Host, the Communion under one Kind alone, the

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Invocation of Saints, the worshipping of Images and Relicks, Purgatory, the Pope's Supremacy, and all the rest of their Errors: If (I say) they would have us receive all these things as necessary to Salvation; it is incumbent on them to prove, First, that all these Doctrines were taught by the Apostles; and Secondly, That God requires the Belief of them from us. Neither of these Points is pretended to be proved from the Principles of Natural Reason: And therefore if they take upon them any other Way to prove them, it must be either from *Holy Scripture* (in which they most notoriously fail) or from some new Revelation made by God; of which they ought to give a sufficient Account, if they expect that we should believe them.

I shall conclude with a Repetition of those most divine Words of *St. Paul*, which I have once already mentioned, and ought to be deeply imprinted upon the Heart of every *Christian*, Tit. ii. 11. *The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us that, denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World; Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God,*

God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works. This we are sure is all good, and agreeable to the Will of God. In the Name of God then, let us *Prove, Approve, hold it fast,* and bring forth the Fruit of it in the whole Course of our Lives to the Glory of God, and our own eternal Salvation, through the same our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



PERSUASIVE

To the STUDY of the

HOLY SCRIPTURES.

In a LETTER to a

SOBER GENTLEMAN

OF THE

Church of *Rome*.

By the Most Reverend
Dr. *EDWARD SYNGE*,
Lord Archbishop of *Tuam* in Ireland.

L O N D O N :

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PERSUASIVE

To the STUDY of the

HOLY SCRIPTURES, &c.

S I R,

I KNOW that the shorter a Discourse is, provided it be plain and rational, the more acceptable it is to you. As to the Reasonableness of what I now offer, you alone can judge for yourself: But I will endeavour not to be tedious. Let us first see how far we are already agreed in our Opinions.

First, we both are fully persuaded, that God is an eternal Mind or Spirit, infinite in Knowledge, Wisdom, Power, and every other Perfection: That he

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created

created the Universe, and governs and conducts it in the most wise Manner; altho' our shallow Understanding is not able, in many Cases, to assign the Reasons of his particular Dispensations; and that he is our supreme Lord, to whose Will we are all bound to submit, and give Obedience, as far as we can any way come to the Knowledge of it.

Secondly, We are agreed that the Will of God, as far as we are concerned to know it, is fully contained in that Religion which was taught to the World by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, who first appeared publickly, in the Land of *Judea* or *Israel*, in and soon after the Reign of *Tiberius* the *Roman* Emperor. Before that Time, the People of *Israel*, and a few Profelytes who adhered to them, had a written Law given by God for their Direction: But all the other Nations of the World had no other divine Law to direct them, save only what was made known to them by their own Reason.

Thirdly, We are agreed that the *New-Testament* (as we call it) was written or approved of, by the Apostles of Christ

Christ, and soon dispersed abroad, through many Parts of the World, among those who embraced the Christian Religion; amongst whom it soon after became very publick, and was generally read and studied: And that this Book contains a true (tho' you will not allow it to be a full) Account of the Christian Religion.

Fourthly, We are agreed that the *Old Testament* (as we term it) was also left with the Christian Church, as a Book of Divine Authority, and was generally read and studied by Christians. You indeed maintain that those Writings, which we call *Apocryphal*, are a part of the *Old Testament*, and of like Authority with the rest of it: About which, tho' I differ in Opinion from you; yet at present I have no Occasion to debate that Matter. For I think they are of good Use, tho' not divinely inspired.

These *Holy Scriptures*, above all other Books, I would persuade you to study with the greatest Attention and Diligence. Let us first consider the Objections which you make against it. I shall put them all together that they

may appear in their full Force.

“ You do not understand the origi-
 “ nal Languages, in which the *Holy*
 “ *Scriptures* were written. It is allow-
 “ ed, on all Hands, that in them there
 “ are many obscure and dark Passages;
 “ whereby you fear you may be drawn
 “ into Errors or Heresies, to the Ha-
 “ zard of your eternal Salvation. It
 “ is the proper Business of the Clergy
 “ to understand the *Scriptures*; and out
 “ of them to instruct the People com-
 “ mitted to their Care and Guidance.
 “ And it is much safer for you to rely
 “ upon the Infallibility of your Church,
 “ and the Care of your spiritual Guides,
 “ than by your own Understanding to
 “ attempt the finding out of the true
 “ Religion, and the Articles of the
 “ Christian Faith; which you are bound
 “ to believe, and wherein it is very
 “ dangerous to be deceived. Nor can
 “ you hope, of yourself, to be able to
 “ to find out sufficient Answers to all
 “ the subtle Arguments of Hereticks,
 “ and therefore you think it much bet-
 “ ter not to attempt it. Neither have
 “ you a *Licence* given you to read the
 “ *Holy Scriptures*; or if you had; to
 “ what

“what Purpose would it be for you to
 “study them, since you are forbidden
 “to form any Judgment of your own
 “upon the Sense of them, but what
 “you receive from the Church?”

These are your Allegations against
 your studying the *Holy Scriptures*. Let
 us consider them severally in their Or-
 der.

“You are utterly unacquainted with
 “the *Hebrew*, *Chaldee*, and *Greek*
 “Tongues. How then can you be sure
 “of the true Sense of the *Holy Scriptures*;
 “when you can have no recourse to
 “them in any of those Languages where-
 “in they, or any Part of them, were
 “originally written?”

This Objection ought not to be
 made by any Member of the Church
 of *Rome*, who understands *Latin* as you
 do: The Council of *Trent* having de-
 clared the vulgar *Latin* Translation of
 the Holy Bible to be *Authentick*.

But, waving this, it is most evident
 that, by the Help of this Translation,
 and of others that are extant in Langua-
 ges which you well understand, you
 may as well learn the Sense of the holy
 Scriptures, as far as it is any Way ne-

cessary for you to know it, as if you understood the original Languages.

Other Knowledge may be delightful, and, in divers Respects, useful; but all that is *necessary* for you to learn, from the *Holy Scriptures*, is the right and sure Way to everlasting Salvation. *From a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus*, says St. Paul to Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15. *Search the Scriptures* (Why?) *For in them ye think ye have eternal Life*: Says Christ to the People, Job. 5. 39. If such Things were said of the *Old Testament*, when *that* alone was extant; how much more when the *New Testament* (written by the Assistance of the same Spirit of God) is added to it?

Many Translations and Expositions of the *Holy Scriptures* have been made by Men of undoubted Learning, in different Ages, and far distant Places. If you doubt of the Meaning of any Passage in *Scripture*, in which Passage your Salvation is no way concerned, there is no Reason why you should much trouble yourself about it. But
if

if you think your Salvation is any way interested in it; take a little Pains to compare several of these Translations together. If you find all or most of them to agree; what Doubt can remain with you but that this is the true Meaning of this Passage? But if you cannot thus satisfy yourself, have recourse to those Passages about which there is no Difference of Opinion: And enough of them there are in *Holy Scripture* fully to inform you of every thing which God requires you either to believe or do: and what God does not require from you, there is no *Necessity* for you to learn. If Christians of all Sorts would lay aside all *Pre-possession* and resolve to be determined by those very many Passages of *Holy Scripture*, which are so plain that none but a prejudiced Mind can mistake them; there is no Translation of it (which is of any Repute) but what might clearly and satisfactorily inform them touching all that God has made *necessary* to their everlasting Happiness. *Eternal Salvation is certainly well worth all the Labour we can bestow upon it.*

“ In the *Holy Scriptures*, you are told,
 “ there are many obscure Passages,
 “ whereby you fear you may be drawn
 “ into Errors or Heresies, to the Ha-
 “ zard of your Salvation.” But will
 you take any Man’s bare Word for this,
 when your Salvation is at Stake? Read
 the *Scriptures* with Care and Attention
 (particularly the *New Testament*) read
 them with an honest Heart and an im-
 partial Mind, and you will soon be con-
 vinced that they are sufficiently plain,
 indeed as plain as Words can be, in all
 those Things which God requires from
 us in order to eternal Salvation.

“ But it is the proper Business of the
 “ Clergy to understand the *Scriptures*,
 “ and out of them to instruct the Peo-
 “ ple.” It is their Business, no doubt.
 But ought not you to be satisfied that
 the Instructions, which they give you
 are right? You are a Traveller, and
 you want a Guide. But will you not
 keep your Eyes open? And when you
 yourself may easily become well ac-
 quainted with the great Road; will you
 leave it in the Power of any Guide
 (perhaps for private Ends of his own)
 most palpably to mislead you? In Cases
 of

of Law or Physick, you consult Men whom you suppose to have good Skill in those Professions. But if common Sense and Reason tell you that they misguide you; will you not so much as inquire into the Directions which they give you? I pray, apply this to the Case of Religion. What has God given you Reason and Understanding for?

“ You think it *safer* to rely upon the “ *Infallibility* of your Church and the “ Care of your spiritual Guides, than “ to judge for yourself in Matters of “ Religion.” But ought you not first to be *very sure* of this pretended *Infallibility*; in whom it resides; and how you may have *infallible* Recourse to it; before you venture your Salvation upon it? How can you be *sure* of these things, if you do not judge of the Arguments from *Scripture*, which are brought to prove them? And if you may and ought to judge of the Sense of *Scripture* in such an important Matter, which you make to be the Groundwork of your whole Religion; why may you not do the same in those Points which are not of such great Importance? If here you rely upon the Care of your spiritual

A 6 Guides;

Guides; may not these Guides be influenced by the Prejudice of Education, their own Interest, or some other wrong Motives; and thereby themselves drawn into many Mistakes?

—“ Mistakes in Religion are dangerous.” True! if they arise from your own Fault or Negligence. But when you have honestly and sincerely done all that lies in your Power to be rightly informed; you cannot imagine that God, who is wise, good, and gracious, will be offended with you for any Error which you fall into, and have no Way to remedy.

“ You would willingly rely upon Men of better Understanding than your own.” But ought not your own Understanding also to be satisfied touching the Way to Salvation? Or for what better Use has God given it to you? Men of great Understanding differ about Matters of Religion, or pretended so to be. If you study not the *Holy Scriptures*, what Rule have you to know which of these great Men you ought to follow? The most fundamental and important Doctrines of Religion, both as to Faith and Practice, are universal-ly

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ly owned by Christians of all Churches
 or Persuasions, and look'd upon to be
 necessary to Salvation. These Doctrines
 are most plainly set forth, repeated,
 and inculcated in the *Holy Scriptures*.
 Imprint these Truths well in your mind,
 and they will be a great Preservative to
 you against all those Errors which Men
 of different Sorts have adopted into
 their Religion. *He, who is well ac-*
quainted with the Great Road, which God
has mark'd out to Heaven, will not be ea-
sily led astray into By-paths.

“You are not able to answer all the
 “subtle Arguments, which Hereticks
 “draw from *Scripture* to support their
 “Heresies.” How then do you know
 that all those are *Hereticks* whom some
 Men call so? And if you do not *know*
 them to be such, how can you, with
 Truth or Justice, give them such an
 odious Character? God has not made
 you or me the Judges of *Hereticks*: Let
 us then leave them to *stand or fall to*
their own Master, Rom. xiv. 4. It
 ought to make *us* thankful, that *we*
 have the means of knowing the Way to
 Salvation: Which Knowledge, or the
 Means of it, we ought not to slight or
 neglect.

“You

“ You have not gotten a *Licence* to
 “ read the *Holy Scriptures*.” You read
 many other Books without a *Licence*.
 Then why not the Book which God
 himself has given us? If you were in a-
 ny of those Countries where your Church
 has established the *Inquisition*; you might
 safely read lewd and immoral Books,
 provided they were free from [what you
 call] *Heresy*: But if the *Bible* were
 found with you, and you had not a
Licence to read it, you would be cruel-
 ly dealt with. Here (God be praised)
 you are free from such barbarous Ty-
 ranny. God has given, to all Man-
 kind, *the Air* for the sustaining of our
 natural life: Have you Need of any
 other *Licence* but his to breathe it? He
 has given his *Holy Word* to all Men in-
 differently; with a Command to every
 Man, as he is capable, to study it (as
 I shall presently shew you:) What
 Power then (I mean what *lawful Power*)
 have all the Men in the World to re-
 strain you from it?

“ Why should you study the *Holy*
 “ *Scriptures*, when you are not allowed
 “ to judge of the Sense of them, but
 “ as you receive it from the Church?”

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Thou shalt do no Murder; Thou shalt not commit Adultery; Thou shalt not steal; says the *Scripture*. Can Words be plainer? And may we not form a sure Judgment of the Meaning of these Passages, until the Church gives it out to us? Thousands and Thousands of Passages altogether as plain, there are throughout the *Bible*, which point out to us every thing that is necessary to our Salvation; why then may we not as well judge of the Sense of them also? *Yea and why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?* says Christ, *Luke xii. 57.* He who has Eyes, and will open them, needs none other to inform him that the Sun shines at Noonday. Many of your learned Men (however mistaken in diverse Points) have writ useful Expositions or Commentaries upon the *Holy Scriptures* and each Part of them. But none of these are made authentick by any publick Act of the Church. Is there no Use then to be made of the Labours of such Men? Or what Use can we make of them except we form a Judgment of their several Expositions? Which is plainly to judge of the Sense of *Scripture*.

If

— If we must receive no Sense of *Scripture* but what is given to us by the Church; either the greatest Part of the *Bible* must remain useless to us, or the Church must publish an authentick Exposition of the whole: And why has not your Church (which pretends to be infallible) yet done this great Service to the Christian Religion?

Perhaps you will demand, “What
“are they who cannot read, to do?
“Must *they* also study the *Scriptures*?
“Or if they may be saved by the
“Means of the Instructions given them
“by their spiritual Pastors; why may
“not you?” To this I shall give you
a plain, and I hope, a satisfactory
Answer.

— God, who is infinitely wise and good, expects or requires nothing impossible, or (which is the same) impracticable from any Man. But every Man, according to his Capacity and Ability, is under the greatest Obligation to endeavour to know God’s Will, and to put it in Practice. The only Way, whereby we can come to the Knowledge of God’s Will, is by carefully attending to our own *Reason* and to that *Reve-*

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lation which he has made of himself; calling in the best Helps we can get to assist us. For better Helps, than a Man can get, he cannot be required to make use of. An illiterate Man may have the Use of his *Reason*: Nor do we know of any other *Revelation* that God has made of himself, but what is contained in the *Holy Scriptures*; which all Christians own to be of divine Authority. A Man, who cannot read, may easily get his good Neighbour, his Fellow-servant, it may be his Wife, or his Child, to read the *Four Gospels* and other Parts of the *Scriptures*, which are easy to be understood, to him; in which he may spend several Hours each Lord's Day: And some, who have taken this Method, have been known to make very good Proficiency in the Knowledge of Religion. If then an illiterate Man, by the best Helps he can get, attains to the Knowledge of the Terms of Salvation appointed by God in his *Holy Word*, (which may easily be done even by one of a mean Capacity) and honestly suits his Practice thereunto; he has done all that lies in his Power, and consequently all that
 God

God requires from him in order to his Salvation.

But your Case is very different from that of such a Man. You have many more Helps than he, whereby to be fully acquainted with the whole Law of God set forth to us in the *Holy Scriptures*, and thereby not only to satisfy your own Conscience, but often also to be a Means of giving the like Satisfaction to others: And if you neglect all this, and will give yourself up blindfold to be guided by others, no matter whom, can you imagine that God will not call you to a strict Account for such gross Negligence?

Timothy from a Child, had been brought up in the *Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*; whereby he was *made wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. But those of your Communion are, for the most part, taught that “ If they believe as “ the Church believes, if they hear “ Mass as often as they can (tho’ they “ do not understand it) if they frequent- “ ly confess their Sins, with Sorrow, “ to a Priest, receive his Absolution, “ and perform the Penance which he “ enjoins

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“enjoins them, and conform their
 “Lives to the Rules of the Church,
 “in abstaining from Flesh-meat, say-
 “ing their Beads, &c.” they shall
 certainly be saved, tho’ they never look
 into a *Bible* or hear it read. Nor is it
 a Wonder that Men who from their In-
 fancy, have been bred up in this indo-
 lent Manner, should shrink back from
 the Labour (tho’ but small) of getting
 better Knowledge of Religion. This I
 take to be the true Reason why the
 Study of the *Holy Scriptures* is so much
 neglected by most of your common
 People, and by many of you who in o-
 ther Matters do not want Understanding.
 God says, *get Wisdom, get Under-
 standing: Forget it not*, Prov. iv. 5.
Add to your Virtue Knowledge, 2 Pet. i. 5.
*Grow in the Knowledge of our Lord and
 Saviour Jesus Christ*, Chap. iii. 18. No,
 say these Men, we need not trouble
 ourselves about more *Knowledge*. Igno-
 rance, with Credulity, is our safest
 Way to Heaven. Take care that such
 Thoughts as these get not Possession
 of your Mind. They will not excuse
 you before God.

Having thus, I hope, removed those
 Objections

Objections which hitherto have kept you back from the Study of the *Holy Scriptures*; I shall now offer a few things to your Consideration, in order to prompt and stir you up to it. This is a very copious Subject, and, if it were fully handled, might well fill a Volume. But I have promised to be brief.

Before I begin; I must give you this most necessary Caution, that whenever you read the *Scriptures*, you should always do it with a Heart and Mind duly prepared for it, or else you will receive no Benefit thereby. Our blessed Saviour, in one of his most divine Parables, (*Luke viii. 5. &c.*) compares the *Word of God* unto *Seed* sown in the Earth by the Husbandman. If you hear or read this *Word* carelessly; it will be like *Seed sown in the High-way*: The Devil, like the Fowls of the Air, will soon take it away out of your Heart. If you read or hear with a faint and slender Attention; the *Word*, to you, will be like *Seed sown on a Rock*, without a sufficient Depth of Earth. It may at first spring up a little, but will soon wither away: Especially if Trouble or Persecution should

ould arise because of it. If your Heart be possessed with the Love of this World, and of the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of it; such Desires and Inclinations as these, prevailing within you, will *choak the Word of God*, and make it become fruitless, as *Thorns springing up*, do the *Seed that is sown among them*. But if you receive the Seed of God's Word in an honest and good Heart, you will keep it and bring forth Fruit with Patience. Whenever therefore you read the Bible, do it sincerely with this View alone, that from thence you may learn how to perform your Duty, and thereby to please God, and secure your own Eternal Salvation.

The Reason why many, who study the Scriptures with some sort of Care, do not thereby become better, is that they read them with a wrong View; to increase their speculative Knowledge, to exercise their critical Faculty, to maintain Opinions, which they perhaps think to be true, but are not necessary to Salvation, to maintain the Interest of that Party which they have espoused; or with whatever particular Views they read them, if the main design (of complete

complete Holiness in order to Eternal Happiness) be either wanting, or but faintly pursued; such Men, with all their Study, will not, cannot be made good Christians, whatever Knowledge they may seem to have gotten thereby.

The principal Motive, which introduces all the rest, that I shall urge for your studying the *Holy Scriptures*, is this, that God has laid it upon you as a *Duty*, and therefore, you may be sure will one Day call you to a strict Account how you have performed it. Before the Days of *Moses*, Mankind had no Instructions in Religion (except what God gave to some *Particular Persons* by Revelation) but only what might arise from a due Attendance to their own sober *Reason*, assisted by such Documents as Parents may well be supposed to give their Children, and other good Men, such as *Noah* (who was a *Preacher of Righteousness*, 2 Pet. ii. 5.) may also be supposed to have given to all who would hearken to them, both before and after the general Deluge.

Whether Idolatry, as well as Immorality, prevailed in the World, before the general Deluge, seems now to be

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a needless Enquiry. But, that in process of Time the Ways of Men became so generally, and almost universally corrupt, both by wicked Practices, and false and idolatrous Notions of God and Religion, as that the true Notions of them were in Danger of being quite extinguished in the World, is allowed by all. And therefore to preserve, and in time to propagate true Religion among Men, God was pleased, in a very particular Manner to manifest himself to *Abraham*, and in time to make Choice of the *Children of Israel* (who were Part of *Abraham's* Posterity) for a peculiar People, amongst whom to place his Name.

When God brought *the Children of Israel* out of *Egypt* and separated them from all other Nations; he gave them a *Written Law*, contained in the Books of *Moses*, which he commanded, not only the *Priests*, but all the *People* also diligently to study and teach to their Children: As is most manifest from several Passages in that Law itself, and denied by none.

In process of time, God was pleased to stir up the Spirits of other holy Men

Men to commit to *Writing*, not only the History of the People of *Israel*, but also many Explications and Enforcements of the Law which he had given them, particularly the moral Part of it.

After the Return of that People, or the greatest Part that were left of them, from the *Babylonish* Captivity: All these *Writings* were carefully collected, and, through God's Providence, translated into *Greek* (a Language then generally known) and, in the Days when our Blessed Saviour was upon the Earth, were called by the Name of the *Holy Scriptures*, and generally read by all Sorts of People. These are the *Scriptures* which our Saviour directed the People to *Search*, Joh. v. 39. (and those at *Berea* are commended for Searching, Acts 17. 11.) These are *Moses* and the *Prophets* whom he directs Men to *bear*, Luke xvii. 29. These are *the Law* and *the Testimony*, to which God's Prophets refer all the People, Isai. viii. 20. These are *the Scriptures*, to which Christ and his Apostles so often appeal, and which *Timothy* is commended for *knowing from a Child*, as being able to make
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About eight Years (some say less)
 after the Ascension of *Christ* into Hea-
 ven, a large Account of his Life and
 Doctrine (which were well known where-
 ever the Gospel had then been preached)
 was published in *writing* by St. *Matthew*
 one of his Companions and Apostles.
 This was very soon followed by a like
 Account from St. *Mark*, and not long
 after from St. *Luke*. Others also of
 Christ's Apostles and Disciples, in their
Writings, farther inculcated and explain-
 ed the same Doctrine which he in his
 Life-time, had taught. And, last of
 all, the Apostle St. *John*, in his Gospel
 and three Epistles, added whatever
 might be thought necessary for the more
 full and better Understanding of all the
 holy Writers who had gone before him;
 and in his Gospel (Chap. 20. 31.) ex-
 pressly says *These things are written* (for
 what Reason? That they might be lockt
 up in the Hands of a few? No! but
 that all might have recourse to them)
that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ
the Son of God, and that believing ye might
have Life through his Name.

All these *Writings*, which were then published by the Apostles and Disciples of Christ, were soon collected by the Christian Churches, and called by the Name of the *New Testament*, to distinguish it from what we call the *Old Testament*, which before the coming of Christ, had by God been committed to the Church of *Israel*, Rom. iii. 2. And the *Old* and *New Testament*, taken together, have long gone by the Name of the *Holy Bible*; or *the Bible* as we commonly call it. And that this *Holy Bible* was carefully read and studied, both publickly and privately, by the Primitive Christians, and diverse Translations of it in all Ages of the Christian Church, carefully made and every where dispersed, is too notorious to be denied even by your own most learned Writers. And, lastly, that all these things came to pass by the ordering of God's Providence, without which even *a Sparrow does not fall on the ground*, (Mat. 10. 29.) no good Christian I am sure will deny.

— Since then God has been thus careful (if I may thus speak) to give us the *Holy Scriptures*, whereby to make his Will manifest to us; is it not the *Duty* of every one of us, according to our Ability

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Ability and Opportunities, to have Recourse to them? He who understands the original Languages in which they were written, ought certainly to study them in those Languages; and he who does not, or cannot read at all, ought to make the best Enquiry he can into the Contents of them, as far as is necessary to know what God requires from him. But for a man totally to lay them aside, and to give himself blindly up to the Conduct of any Man or Men whatsoever, is such a Neglect and even Contempt of God as cannot be excused.

If you still demand what shall become of them, who, in many Parts of the World, have not so much as heard of the *Holy Scriptures*, or are by Force withheld from reading them? it is enough to answer that God will judge no Man by a Law, of which he is totally and *unavoidably* ignorant. But this can be no Excuse for you, who (as I have shewn) have sufficient Ability and Opportunity of fully informing yourself of God's holy Will and Law, as far as it is necessary for you to know them.

That before and at the coming of Christ into this World, not only the *Priests*, but the *People* also were commanded

manded to read and study the *Written Word of God*, and that this Command was farther enforced upon them by our blessed Saviour himself, is denied by none. Since then the *New Testament* is by all Christians maintained to have been written by the Assistance of the same Holy Spirit of God as the *Old one* was; can any one doubt but that the same Command holds good, with respect to the one as well as to the other?

I hope I have said enough, tho' more might be added, to convince you that it is your *Duty* to study the *holy Scriptures*. Nor do there want the strongest and most weighty Inducements to make you diligent and industrious in this Study.

All Men, who have the least Sense of any Religion, do universally agree in this, that the Practice of Morality, Virtue and Piety, is absolutely necessary in order to eternal Salvation. Some Rules of this Practice have been given by Philosophers, from the Principles of Reason: And the whole Practice has, from the *Scripture*, been described by many Christian Divines. These Books, or some of them, I would not have you neglect, because they will help you to understand

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understand the *Scriptures*. But if you would know what Morality, Virtue, and Piety in their utmost Perfection are; read the *Scriptures* themselves; read them with Attention and an honest Heart (without which your Reading will but increase your Condemnation) and you will find that *the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart.* Heb. iv. 12.

In the *Old Testament* you will find the Rules of Morality, Virtue, and Piety laid down and inculcated; and in the divine Discourses of our Blessed Saviour, and the rest of the *New Testament*, you will again meet with them so fully and clearly explained and exalted to their highest Pitch, as will fully convince you that the conscientious Practice of them is the only way for a Man to become qualified for the Enjoyment of God both here and eternally hereafter.

In the midst of those many Controversies about Religion, whereby the World has been so long and is still divided, and even distracted: What a

satisfaction will it be to you clearly to distinguish between the things on which your Salvation depends, and not only the contrary Errors and Heresies, which you ought carefully to avoid, but also other inferior Truths, of which if you happen to be ignorant, your Soul, will not be thereby endangered? And this you may do, to the utmost Conviction of your Mind, by diligently studying the *Holy Scriptures*.

Many Truths there are into which, I grant, Men of Capacity may and ought soberly to inquire, tho' not fiercely to contend and wrangle about them. — But those Things which God requires from us all, as the Condition of our Salvation, are so plainly and emphatically mark'd out to us in his *Holy Word*, as that no Man, who reads it with Attention, but must needs take notice of them. And that you may the better understand what I mean, I shall quote a few Passages to you, and leave you to collect others from your own Reading.

Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter. Fear God and keep his Commandments: For this is the whole Duty of Man. For God shall bring every work into Judgment, with every secret Thing,

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Thing, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil. Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

To what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? Saith the Lord.—Wash ye, make ye clean; Put away the Evil of your doings from before mine Eyes. Cease to do Evil, learn to do Well; seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless; Plead for the Widow. Isai. i. 11. &c.

Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the High God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-offerings, with Calves of a year old? — He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require from thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Mich. vi. 6. &c.

These and many such things were said even at that Time when the Laws of God which prescribed Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices, and other ceremonial Observances, were in force. Hear a Word or two from the New Testament, after all these things were abolished and laid aside.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and with all thy Mind; and thy Neighbour as thy self. — This do and thou shalt live. Mat. x.

Read the fifth, sixth, and seventh Chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel; which are too long to be transcribed.

In every Nation, he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him. Acts x. 35.

The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men; Teaching us that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World; looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People zealous of Good Works. Tit. ii. 11, &c.

Flee youthful Lusts: But follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart. But foolish and unlearned Questions avoid; knowing that they do gender Strifes. 2 Tim. ii. 22, 23.

That is the Word of Faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved. Rom. x. 8, 9. Always provided that thy
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Life be answerable to this Belief; which is ever to be supposed.

The Consideration of these Things, and how easy it is for every sober Christian to avoid the Briars and Thorns of Disputation, and to learn the direct and plain Way to Heaven, if he will but take the Pains to walk in it: This Consideration, I say, is so delightful, that I can hardly forbear to transcribe many more Passages to the same Purpose, both from the *Old* and *New Testament*: But I hope you will take particular Notice of them in your own Reading, and make the right Use of them.

The Study of *History* is both instructive and delightful to an inquiring Mind. By it we are brought to the Knowledge of what has come to pass in former Ages and distant Places of the World: And by the good and evil Examples which there we meet with (the former to be imitated, the latter to be avoided) we learn, upon many Occasions, how to conduct our own Actions in the best Manner. The *Scripture History* is the best attested to us of any that is extant: The Veracity of all the Holy Writers has the Testimony of God:

in all those Miracles which have been wrought for the Confirmation of the Truth of what has been said. The History of the *Old Testament* has the concurrent Testimony of the whole People of *Israel*, by whom, in the several Ages, it was remarkably known, and has been all along most firmly believed. It has also the Testimony of Christ and his Apostles, by whom it was delivered down for Truth to the Christian Church. The History of the *New Testament* has the like Miracles to confirm it, and was in like Manner known and universally believed by all Christians. So that either we must explode *all History* at once (which no Man was ever yet so mad as to think of) or else we must give the greatest Credit to the *Scripture History*, as having no Mixture of Falseness in it: tho' possibly, at this Distance of Time, we may be at a Loss about the Meaning of some [less material] Passages in it.

For the better understanding, recollecting, and remarking of the *Scripture History*, it will be of good use to read also some of the Abstracts or Abridgments that have been made of it. This is done at the End of many of our *Bibles*,

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bles, in *an Index to the Holy Bible*, there placed. The same is done by *Prideaux* in the Beginning of his *Introduction to History*, and more briefly by *Ostervald*, in his *Abridgment of the History of the Bible*, prefixed to his *Catechism*, and is also added to the End of a useful Collection of Texts of *Scripture*, reprinted in *Dublin*, and Entitled *The Word of God the best Guide*.

The *Scripture History* gives us an Account of many Things of which, being so easy to be known, it is a Shame that such a Man as you, or indeed that almost any Man who thinks at all, should be ignorant. Take the chief of them in a short View.

God, who is Eternal, by his almighty Power, created this whole Universe, in a Manner becoming his Divine Majesty. *He spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.* Psal. xxxiii. 9.

Into Things that are beyond our Reach or Capacity, we have nothing to do to enquire any farther than God has thought fit to make some of them in some Measure known to us. But when God had created the whole Word, he thought fit, for some Ages, by his

Providence to govern and conduct this lower Part of it in a Manner which to us, at this time, may seem extraordinary; until, after the coming of *Christ* and the Publication of the Gospel, he was pleased to settle and leave it in the Order wherein it has ever since continued.

The first Man and Woman, whom God created and joined in Marriage, transgressed the positive Command of their Creator: And thereby introduced Sin and Misery into the World. Yet even then God had Pity on them, and promised that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Head of the Serpent*, who had tempted her to Sin. Gen. iii. 15. By which was meant (tho' perhaps not till After-ages fully understood) that *Jesus Christ*, born of a pure Virgin, should *destroy the Works of the Devil*, (1 John iii. 8.) whom the same St. *John* calls *that old Serpent*. Rev. xii. 9.

- Even after the Fall of our first Parents, the Reason, with which Mankind continued to be endowed, was sufficient, (if it had been duly attended unto) to raise their Thoughts up to God, and to teach them Obedience to all his *Moral Laws*; which then made
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up the whole of their Duty, and has ever since continued to be the chief Part of it, *So that they were without Excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.* Rom. i. 20.

When Mankind generally became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened, so that they every where gave themselves up to Idolatry and Immorality; God was pleased by supernatural Revelation, to keep up some Knowledge of himself and his Laws in the World. This Revelation was, for some Ages, made only to particular Persons, and possibly to others beside those whose Names are recorded in the *Holy Scriptures*. At last he thought fit to make Choice of the People of *Israel*, as his peculiar People, to whom he made himself and his Laws known by *Moses and the Prophets*, and wrought many Miracles to confirm the Truth of what they delivered. Thus Matters continued until the Return of that People (or such as were left of them) from the *Babylonish Captivity*. Soon after which, we have no certain Account of either Prophecies or Miracles among them, until the coming of Christ. The *Written Word of God* (*Moses and the Prophets*,

Prophets, Luke xvi. 29.) was the only Rule they had to walk by; to which they added some vain *Traditions* of their own, but rejected by our Blessed Saviour.

By the Dispersion, first, of the ten Tribes of *Israel*, and afterwards, of those of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, in their several Captivities (to which we may add the Translation of the *Holy Scriptures* into *Greek*) no doubt can be made but that some Knowledge of the true God was farther propagated. At last, God sends his Son *Jesus Christ* into the World, fully and finally to make known his Will to Mankind, as far as it is necessary for us to know it. *Jesus Christ* wrought many Miracles for the Confirmation of his Doctrine, and made choice of *Apostles* and others to teach and preach the same, first, to the *Jews*, and then to all other Men who would hearken to it. After the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ* from the Dead, and his Ascension into Heaven, these *Apostles*, and other Disciples, faithfully executed their Commission. They preached the Gospel (so the Doctrine of *Christ* is called) to all Nations, being thereunto enabled by the supernatural Knowledge of all Languages,

guages, and the Power of working many Miracles. By this *Gospel* the Obligation of the *Ceremonial* and *Judicial* Part of the Law given by *Moses* was discharged, and the *Moral* Part of it confirmed and explained, and the Church of God laid open for every Man who would believe in *Christ*, and live according to his Laws.

The *New Testament* (whereby great Light is given to many Passages of the *Old*) plainly informs us of the Divinity of *Christ*, his miraculous Conception and Birth, his most holy Life, his many Sufferings, even to *Death upon the Cross*, with his great Patience and Resignation under them, his Doctrine, Miracles, Resurrection, and Ascension, his sending the *Holy Ghost* upon his *Apostles* and others of his *Disciples*, to enable them, by the Gift of Languages and that of working Miracles, to propagate the *Gospel*; their Labour, Courage and Constancy in teaching and preaching; with many particular Passages highly worth observing. Certainly every *Christian* ought to use his best Endeavours to be well acquainted with all these Things, which are written that we might believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the
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Son of God, and that believing we might have Life thro' his Name. John. xx. 31. And, besides all that is recorded of Jesus Christ, his Apostles and Disciples, great Notice ought to be taken of the History of St. John the Baptist, who was sent before, to prepare the Way of the Lord. Luke iii. 4.

) Let us now look back for a while upon the *Old Testament History*, in which we find many great and illustrious Events recorded, that may justly lead us into an Admiration of the Power and Providence of God. Nor is it at all incredible that, for some Ages, God should govern a newly created World, or the most remarkable Part of it, in such a miraculous Manner, as to us may seem very extraordinary: To us, I say, who find all things now settled in the constant Course of Nature; in which, for ought we know, they are to last for many more Ages than hitherto they have done. And therefore we should not suffer our Minds to be touched with the least Degree of Incredulity at the Relation of sundry Facts, in which it is manifest that God immediately interposed his Power in such a Manner as he does not now appear to do.

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do. The Events, which I chiefly point at, are these. The Creation of the World, with the Order and Method of it, of which I have already spoken.

The different Manner of the Creation of *Man* from that of all other living Creatures. God gave Power to the *Earth* and the *Waters* (which he had before created) to *bring forth* all other bodily Creatures. But *Man* was his own more immediate Work. He *formed Man of the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life; and Man became a living Soul.* Gen. ii. 7. And accordingly, whereas the *sensitive Souls* of all *Brutes*, which they derive from those Elements, out of which they are by the Power of God, produced; the *sensitive Souls* (I say) of all *Brutes*, are guided and governed by those Inclinations or *Instincts* which God, the Author of Nature, has implanted in them for their own Preservation; which *Instincts* they have no Power *in themselves* to curb or controul; whatever they may sometimes, by the *Art of Man* be taught to do; the *rational Soul*, which God himself has implanted in *Man*, is by him endowed with the superior Faculty of
Reason,

Reason, whereby he is enabled to act even contrary to any of his natural Inclinations or *Instincts*, wherever he finds they would otherwise lead him into any Evil or Inconvenience. To this *Reason*, thus implanted in *Man*, we owe all the delightful and beneficial Arts and Sciences that have been invented or found out. To this we owe whatever Order or Regularity is preserved in the World; more of which we might have amongst us, if Men did not voluntarily give way to their Lusts and Passions to rebel against their *Reason*. To this we owe the Establishments of all Civil Societies, without which War and Confusion would every where break in upon us. And, lastly, to this, under God, we owe Religion itself, whereby we are qualified for everlasting Happiness. For if Man were not first *Rational*, it is manifestly impossible that ever he should be *Religious*.

I have thus long dwelt upon the Consideration of *Reason*, to put you in Mind (of what, I fear, you are too apt to forget) that it is the most fundamental Blessing which God has bestowed upon us all; and accordingly to prompt you to be most thankful to him
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or it, and always to make the best Use of it. I return now to the other Events recorded in the *Scripture History*, of which I think you ought to take very particular Notice.

The shining Light, and the settled Order of the Sun, Moon, Planets, and Stars; from whence arises that Variety of Seasons whereby the Comforts of Life are ministred to us: the Day for Labour, the Night for Rest; and the several Times of the Year for the springing up, ripening, and gathering in the Fruits of the Earth.

The *Dominion* which God has given unto Man over the other Creatures, (Gen. i. 26.) by which the Lord of all Things has made it lawful for us to convert them to our own use, as we have occasion for them.

The Faculty of Sight, without which Light would be useless to us, and our Lives rendred uncomfortable, in case they could otherwise be preserved.

The Distinction of the two Sexes, Male and Female, with their mutual Inclination each to the other; without which no living Creatures could be propagated, and the Earth, the Sea, and the Air, must all be left desolate.

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The Creation, or Production, of the first Woman, who was to be *the Mother of all Men living*, (Gen. iii. 20.) and the Institution of Marriage, (Gen. ii. 24.) which is the first Foundation of all regular Society amongst Mankind.

The adapting the Structure of every bodily Creature to the several Places where they were to dwell. Men and Beasts of the Earth have Feet and other Limbs proper for them: The Fishes have Fins, and the Birds Wings, whereby they make their way through the Sea and the Air; and all of every Sort are fitted to receive and digest the Nourishment prepared for them.

Who can read the two first Chapters of the Book of *Genesis*, without dwelling upon the Particulars of what I have here briefly recounted, and crying out, *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom hast thou made them all: The Earth is full of thy Riches: so is the great and wide Sea, &c.* P^{sa}l. civ. 24. Not at present to mention *the Heavens*, of which we have, as yet, but an imperfect Knowledge. But to proceed.

The placing of our first Parents in *the Garden of Eden* (not there to live idle and unemployed, but) to *dress it*
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and to keep it. Gen. ii. 15. which shews that Man, even in the Time of his Innocence, was not made by God to be idle, and therefore surely ought much less now to be so.

The cunning Artifice which the Devil made use of (whether by the Means of a bodily Serpent, or whether he himself alone be meant by *the Serpent*, we need not now dispute) to circumvent and seduce *Eve*, and by her *Adam*, Gen. iii. 1. &c. This was the first Device of *Satan*, whereby he got an Advantage of us, and should make us always watchful against the many Snares which he daily lays for us, of which we are not ignorant. 2 Cor. ii. 11.

If any Man should demand, "What could move *the Devil* or his *Angels* (who are all intelligent Beings) to tempt and seduce Men from their Obedience to God?" I will not here enter into a Digression upon this Subject. It is enough to us to know that, by God's Permission, it is so. How far Envy or obstinate Malignity may prevail in a *Fallen Angel*, who by God's Justice is excluded from Mercy, we are not able to give a clear Account. But that God, for a Trial of our Faith
and

and Obedience, permits *Satan* to tempt us: That if we *resist the Devil*, he will flee from us, *Jam. iv. 7.* But that, if we yield to him and become *Children of Disobedience*, he will work in us, *Eph. ii. 2.* are Truths most manifestly set forth in *Holy Scripture*; and, I may say, confirmed by Experience. Surely therefore we ought to be most watchful against him.

The Consequences of the Transgression of our first Parents. Unto the Woman, Pain in bringing forth Children; unto all Men, Sorrow, Toil, and Trouble in labouring the Earth, *Gen. iii. 16, &c.* the Corruption of our Nature, and the Introduction of Sin and Death into the World, *Rom. v. 12.*

The great Degeneracy of Mankind, which by degrees came on after the Fall of *Adam*. For some time there were a few good Men among them (*Enoch* particularly ought to be taken Notice of, *Gen. v. 22.*) but at last Wickedness so universally prevailed, that it provoked God to send a general Flood of Waters upon the whole Earth, whereby all Creatures that drew Breath were destroyed, except those which, in a miraculous Manner, were preserved with *Noah* in the

the Ark, *Gen.* vi. and vii. The Remembrance of this Flood was long preserved among the succeeding Nations.

"I cannot too often put you in Mind that God's governing a *Newly-created World*, for some Ages, after a very different Manner from what is now settled and established (and God only knows how long it may so continue) ought not to touch your Mind with any Degree of Incredulity. Nor will it, if you duly consider that *to God all Things are possible*. This Consideration you ought to carry in your Mind all along through the *Scripture History*, until such time as we find by Experience that *Miracles* are ceased." But I go on.

The presumptuous and proud Attempt of Men, (when after the Flood, they were become numerous) to build the City or the Tower of *Babel*. Upon which God thought fit to *confound their Language*, and thereby laid them under a Necessity of dispersing themselves in several Colonies according to the different Languages which they spoke. Which is a fair Account of the Original of the several Nations by which the Earth, in a few Ages, became peopled, and

and of the Variety of Language by them spoken; altho' they were all derived from one common Stock. Read the tenth and eleventh Chapters of the Book of *Genesis*.

The long Lives of the ancient Patriarchs before the Flood, and for some time after it: Whereby the Knowledge of the Creation of the World, and of the most remarkable Transactions that came to pass after it, might through a very few Hands be conveyed down from *Adam* to *Noah*, and from him to his Posterity (which might be the Foundation of the History written by *Moses*. Altho' it cannot be doubted but that he, who conversed with God in such a Manner as *Moses* did, was divinely inspired in all that he writ) the World had then been newly created; and we may well suppose was governed by God in a Manner somewhat different from what it now is. Which you must not forget.

The small Beginning and Foundation (laid by *Nimrod*, Gen. x. 8. &c.) of the first great Monarchy that ever was upon the Earth; which afterwards grew to a prodigious Bigness, and lasted for many Ages, tho' not without some Revolutions in it.

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The Calling of *Abraham* (Gen. xii. &c.) in the midst of an idolatrous and sinful World; that in him, his Family and Posterity, the Knowledge of the true God and Religion might be preserved and kept up. The Covenant which God was pleased to make with him, and the Token of it by Circumcision. The Promises made to him, and the fulfilling of them to his Posterity (notwithstanding their frequent Rebellions against God.) The Circumstances of his Life (where *Melchizedeck* may be taken Notice of, Gen. xiv. 18.) And his Obedience to God in all Things, even to the sacrificing of his beloved Son *Isaac* if God had not prevented it. Amongst other Things, his remarkable Condemnation to his Nephew *Lot*, Gen. xiii. 8. may well be observed for our Imitation.

The dreadful Destruction of *Sodom* and its Neighbourhood, for their most abominable Wickedness; with *Abraham's* humble Expostulation with God, and God's gracious Answers touching that Matter, Gen. xviii. 17. &c. The *dead Sea* (as it is called) remains as a Monument of this just Judgment of God upon such Sinners unto this Day.

The Lives of *Isaac* and *Jacob*, with
C God's

God's good Providence, in bringing Good out of Evil, by sending *Joseph* into *Egypt*, to deliver his Father and his Family, with many others, from the great Famine which God thought fit to bring upon all that Country: Which occasioned *Jacob* (then also called *Israel*) with his whole Family to remove into *Egypt*. *Joseph's* strictly upright Behaviour to his Master *Potiphar*, to his Master's wicked Wife, to the Keeper of the Prison wherein, upon her false Accusation, he was put, to *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, who advanced and entrusted him, and, last of all, to his Father and his Brethren; may well be an Example to all who suffer Wrong, and Affliction, to Children, Servants, and to Men in Power and Authority.

In a Word: The great Increase of the People of *Israel* in the Land of *Egypt*, notwithstanding the inhuman Command of the King to destroy all their Male Children. The Preservation of *Moses*, with his Education in the *Egyptian* Court. The bitter Slavery which the *Israelites* underwent in that Land, when *Joseph* their great Benefactor was forgotten. God's sending *Moses* and *Aaron* to deliver them, with the mighty Works which were wrought for that Purpose. Their

Their Passage through the *Red Sea* under God's miraculous Conduct. God's giving the *Ten Commandments* (which were the Foundation of God's whole Law) from *Mount Sinai*, in such an astonishing Manner. His adding so many ceremonial Observances to his Moral Law, whereby to keep his own People *Israel* from growing fond of the pompous Religion of the idolatrous Nations. The wandering of the People of *Israel* for forty Years in the Wilderness, and the Reason of it, with what fell out during that Time: Particularly the dreadful Destruction of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* with their Accomplices; the vain Attempt of *Balaam* the Soothsayer to curse them, and the wicked Advice by him given to their Enemies to inveigle them by the Means of their Women. The Food of *Manna* (never known before or since) given to them, until such Time as they had the Corn of the Land to sustain them. The rooting out of the *Canaanites*, and other Nations, for their Idolatry and great Immorality. The frequent Backslidings of the People of *Israel* from God; for which he often gave them into the Hands of their Enemies, and, upon their Repentance, again delivered them by the Means of the

several Judges whom he raised up to govern them, until the Days of *Samuel*. The placing of *Saul* to be King over them and the setting him aside for his Disobedience. The Advancement of *David* to the Throne, with all his warlike Actions. The peaceable Reign of his Son *Solomon*, with his building and consecrating of the Temple at *Jerusalem*. The Revolt of ten Tribes from *Rehoboam* the Son of *Solomon*, whereby the People were divided into two Kingdoms, viz. that of *Israel*, under *Jeroboam* and other Kings that came after him, and that of *Judah*, which continued faithful to the House of *David*. The wicked Policy of *Jeroboam* (imitated by all his Successors) to keep his People from going to *Jerusalem* (where the Posterity of *David* reigned) by setting up the golden Calves to be worshipped at *Dan* and *Bethel*. The Continuance of these two Kingdoms for many Years, with all that came to pass in them; particularly the Prophets which God raised up in them both, to admonish them of their Idolatry and other Wickedness. The Conquest of the Kingdom of *Israel* by *Shalmaneser* King of *Assyria*, with the Captivity of the ten Tribes: From some of whom who remained in the Country,

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and those Heathens who were sent to inhabit there, sprang up the People, who afterwards were called *Samaritans*. The Conquest of the Kingdom of *Judab* (which subsisted about one hundred and thirty Years after that of *Israel*) by *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*, with the Captivity of that People, which we commonly call the *Babylonish Captivity*. The Continuance of this Captivity for seventy Years, with the remarkable Things which during that Time came to pass: Where what is recorded in the Book of *Ester* deserves a very particular Notice. The Return of the *Jews* (or of as many of them as would go) from this Captivity, with the rebuilding of the Temple and City of *Jerusalem* (notwithstanding the many Difficulties they met with) and the Reestablishment of the Worship of God, and of civil Government amongst that People. From which Time we have no History put forth by any inspired Writer, until we come to the *New Testament History*, of which I have already spoken. But what is wanting of the *Jewish History* may (sufficiently for our Purpose) be gathered from the Books of the *Maccabees* and the Writings of *Josephus*, which are translated into *English*.

— All these great Events (which I have only pointed at) together with many remarkable Incidents, which are intermixed with them, cannot but give every Man of Understanding a high and awful Apprehension of God's Power and Providence in the Government of the World: And therefore ought to put every Man, who is capable of it, upon a diligent Study of the *Scripture History*, in which these Things are at large set forth.

— Before I dismiss this Subject, I must observe that there is one Thing peculiar, I think, to *Scripture History* (besides the divine Inspiration of the Writers, and the Testimony of Christ and his Apostles) which in a particular Manner recommends it to us; and it is this: That the Faults and Failings even of the best Men are not therein concealed or palliated. When any Man collects the History of Times past from other Writers; the utmost he can do is to compare them one with another, and from thence to collect what he takes to be most probable. But when Men write *Original Histories*; they generally (I think I may say *always*) have some particular Persons or Party in view, whom they manifestly design to favour; and therefore endeavour to conceal their
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Faults, or give them some Turn for their Advantage. But the *Scripture History* has plainly no Aim to advance the Reputation of any Party or Person any farther than by telling the naked Truth. And therefore sets forth not only their Excellencies and good Qualities, but their Faults and Failings also, without any Apology for such Things as are not to be excused. Thus, for Example, the Drunkenness of *Noah*, the Dissimulation of *Abraham*, in making his Wife to pass for his Sister, and the same of *Isaac*, the Murmurs and many Backslidings of the People of *Israel*, the Unadvisedness of *Moses*, whereby he offended God, the several Sins of *David*, *Solomon*, and other great Men, *St. Peter's* denying of Christ, the sharp Contention between *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and many other things which a *partial Historian* would have concealed or palliated; are plainly laid open to the view of every Reader; that we may not think more highly of any Man than what we ought to think, and that *he, who thinketh he standeth*, may be warned, by the Example of others, to *take heed lest he fall*. This *Impartiality* ought to give great Credit to the *Scripture Historians*, even considering them only as *Historians*, and

abstracting from the divine Inspiration whereby they were assisted.

As you read the *historical* Part of the *Bible* (or indeed any other History whatever) be sure you always take particular Notice of every *Example*, both good and evil, which you find there set forth; and above all of that of our *Blessed Saviour* himself. *Good Example*, if well attended to, is a great Incitement to Virtue and Piety. *Take the Prophets for an Example*, says St. James, Jam. v. 10. and ye have heard of the Patience of Job, v. 11. *Christ* left us an *Example*, that we should follow his Steps, says St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 21. And every evil *Example* ought to raise in us a Detestation and Abhorrence of all Sin and Wickedness. *These Things were our Examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil Things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye Idolaters, as were some of them. Neither let us commit Fornication, as some of them committed.—Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted.—Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured.—Now all these Things happened to them for Ensamples: and they are written for our Admonition; says St. Paul, 1 Cor. x. 6. &c.* If in reading the *Holy Scriptures*, and other Books, Men would thus seri-

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cussly reflect upon *good Examples*, for their *Imitation*, and upon *evil ones*, for their *Abhorrence*; their reading would be much more useful and profitable to them, than commonly now it is, when it is done for little more than bare Knowledge or Speculation.

I have dwelt the longer on this Subject, to let you see that the Study of *Scripture History* (if seriously applied to) will be much more entertaining as well as useful to you, than the reading of Plays and Romances, or indeed of any other Histories (tho' they also may be read with Profit) and much more so than the reading of Legends and the Lives of the Saints (or pretended Saints) which many of your Church are very fond of, notwithstanding that they are stuff'd with most improbable and monstrous Stories, for the Truth of which there is no manner of Voucher.

It cannot but be a great Satisfaction to a sober Christian, to consider the many Predictions, or *Prophecies*, that occur in *Holy Scripture*, and how exactly they have been fulfilled. This is a large Subject: But it has been so fully and clearly handled by Men of great Learning, that I need not much enlarge upon it. However, something I shall say, which I hope will

will be to your Satisfaction.

Some of these *Prophecies* (in which we are not much concerned) are indeed obscure, and made much more so by the unreasonable Cavils of Adversaries. But others of them are so clear, and have been so punctually accomplished, as may well assure us that all the rest of them (if we understood them) are the same; (I speak not now of those *Prophecies* contained in the *Revelation of St. John*, some of which probably yet remain to be accomplished.) I shall instance in two *Prophecies* that are so plain, and literally fulfilled, as to admit of no Cavil or Exception.

It is notorious, that the Book of the Prophet *Daniel* was written long before the Conquest made by *Alexander the Great* of the Kingdom of *Persia*; and that this Book has all along (from that Time to this Day) been in the Hands of the *Jews* (wherever dispersed) and reckoned as a Part of their *Holy Scripture*; and was from them received by the Christian Church, among *the Oracles of God to them committed*, Rom. iii. 2. All this (I say) is so notorious, that he who denies it may as well deny every other Thing which he himself has not seen.

Now in this Book of *Daniel*, chap. viii.

1, &c.

i, &c. the Conquest which *the King of Grecia* (who was *Alexander*) afterwards made of *Media* and *Persia*, the Division of his Kingdom, after his Death, and many other Things that followed, are so plainly and literally foretold, that *Porphyry*, the great Heathen Philosopher, could find no other Way of avoiding the Evidence, but by boldly denying what never before had been so much as questioned; and affirming, (without any other Ground but his own Assurance) that this Book was written after all these Events, therein foretold, had actually come to pass. But if Confidence is to be taken for Evidence; let a Man be but impudent enough, and he may deny or affirm what he pleases.

The other *Prophecy*, which I shall mention, is that of our *Blessed Saviour* concerning the Ruin and Destruction of the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, with the Calamities which soon were to befall the *Jews* for their Wickedness, recorded in three of the four *Gospels*; the last of which three (written by *St. Luke*) is known to have been publish'd about fourteen Years before the Event came to pass, and the other two (by *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark*) one of them at least fifteen, and the other about twelve Years before that.

What *Our Saviour* foretold, concerning this dreadful Event, was with this most remarkable Addition, *This Generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.* Mat. xxiv. 34. Mark xiii. 30. Luke xxi. 32. And accordingly, within about thirty seven Years after the Prediction, all that was foretold was fulfilled; as we have an Account of it in the most undoubted Histories of that Time.

I might here add many other *Prophecies*, recorded in *Scripture*, which have literally and exactly been fulfilled. But these two most remarkable ones are, at present, enough to shew that undoubtedly there was a *Prophetick Spirit* (which can only be from *God*) in the Sacred Writers.

But the *Prophecies*, which we *Christians* ought to have the greatest Regard to, are those concerning the *Messiah* or *Christ*; which have been set in a most clear and convincing Light by many of our learned Divines, to whom I might refer you. However; that I may not here seem lightly to pass over a Point of such high Importance, I shall crave your Patience whilst I lay before you a Transcript of what I formerly have briefly written upon this Subject; which I think may, without any great Depth of Learning,
give

give Satisfaction touching it to a sober and rational Man.

“That the whole Body of the *Jewish* Nation have, for above these seven-
 “teen hundred Years past, been in con-
 “stant Expectation of the Appearance
 “of an extraordinary Person, to be sent
 “by God into the World, under the Ti-
 “tle of *Christ* or the *Messiah*, is what
 “they themselves own, and no Man does
 “or can deny: And this very *Expectati-*
 “*on* sufficiently shews that some Predicti-
 “ons or *Prophecies* (whether true or false)
 “there have been, that such a Person
 “was to come. For if no one had ever
 “pretended to foretel any such Thing,
 “what could possibly raise such an uni-
 “versal Imagination in such a vast Mul-
 “titude of People? It is not now my De-
 “sign to enter into a particular Exami-
 “nation of all these *Prophecies*: But if all
 “the most eminent and remarkable ones
 “of them are clearly and conspicuously
 “fulfilled in the Person of our blessed
 “Lord and Saviour *Jesus*, and there is
 “not so much as one of those ancient
 “Predictions, that was ever by the *Jews*
 “themselves interpreted of the *Messiah*,
 “but what is fairly fulfilled and accom-
 “plished in *Him*: This will, at the same
 “time,

“ time, shew that these were real *Prophe-*
 “ *cies*, and not Figments, and that *Jesus*
 “ *Christ*, whom we own and receive, is
 “ really and truly the Person prophesied
 “ of: And since it is allowed on all hands,
 “ that none but *God* can foretel such
 “ Things as are in themselves contingent,
 “ at any considerable Distance of Time
 “ before they come to pass; the Conse-
 “ quence must be, that *Jesus* is the *Mes-*
 “ *siah*, whom God did long since pro-
 “ mise to send into the World; and con-
 “ sequently that the Doctrine and Reli-
 “ gion which he taught is from God
 “ himself.

“ Now the most remarkable *Prophe-*
 “ *cies*, or some of them at least, of anti-
 “ ent Record in the *Old Testament*, and
 “ generally understood to be meant of the
 “ *Messiah*, are these; That he should be
 “ the *Seed of the Woman*; That he should
 “ bruise the *Serpent's Head*, and have his
 “ *Heel bruised* by him; *Gen. iii. 15*. That
 “ he should be the *Seed of Abraham*, and
 “ that in him all the Nations of the Earth
 “ should be blessed; *Gen. xxii. 18*. That
 “ the Sceptre should not depart from *Judah*,
 “ nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet,
 “ until he should come; And that unto him
 “ should the Gathering of the People be;
 “ Gen.

" Gen. xlix. 10. That he should be a
 " Prophet like unto Moses, raised up among
 " the People to speak the Words that God
 " should put into his Mouth; and whosoever
 " of the People of Israel should not hearken
 " to his Words, God would require it of
 " them; Deut. xviii. 18, 19. That he
 " should be from the Root of Jesse (who
 " was the Father of King David.) That
 " he should stand for an Ensign of the Peo-
 " ple, to which the Gentiles should seek: And
 " that his Rest should be glorious; Is. xi. 10.
 " That the Government should be upon his
 " Shoulders; That his Name should be cal-
 " led Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty
 " God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince
 " of Peace; Of the Increase of whose Go-
 " vernment and Peace there should be no
 " End; Upon the Throne of David, and up-
 " on his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish
 " it with Judgment, and with Justice, from
 " henceforth even for ever; Is. ix. 6, 7.
 " That he should be conceived and born of
 " a Virgin, and called Immanuel, (which
 " signifies God with us) Is. vii. 14. Mat.
 " i. 23. That he should be despised and
 " rejected of Men; A Man of Sorrows, and
 " acquainted with Grief. That he should
 " bear our Grievs, and carry our Sorrows,
 " be wounded for our Transgressions; And
 that

“ that *with his Stripes we should be healed*;
 “ The Lord laying *on him the Iniquity of*
 “ *us all*; Is. liii. 2, &c. with more to this
 “ Purpose in the same Chapter. That he
 “ should come within a certain Number
 “ of Years, foretold by the Prophet Da-
 “ niel, (Dan. ix. 24, &c.) and *be cut off,*
 “ *but not for himself*: After which *the Ci-*
 “ *ty and the Sanctuary should be destroyed,*
 “ *and the Sacrifice and Oblation should*
 “ *cease*. These, I say, (with divers o-
 “ thers that may be reckoned up) are re-
 “ markable *Prophecies* concerning the
 “ *Messiah*, recorded in the *Old Testament*,
 “ many Centuries of Years before our
 “ Blessed Saviour’s Appearance in this
 “ World. To which also may be added a
 “ great Number of other Passages, which
 “ by the *Jews* themselves have always
 “ been look’d upon as pointing, some of
 “ them *prophetically* and others *typically*,
 “ [or *representatively*] to the same Person:
 “ Infomuch that, to this very Day, there
 “ is no Opinion that more strongly pos-
 “ sesses the Minds of all that People than
 “ this, That the *Messiah*, whom God
 “ long since promised, and whom *They*
 “ suppose not yet to be come, shall in
 “ due Time come and appear in the
 World.

“ Now

" Now whatever Difficulties may seem
 " to arise in the Interpretation of all, or
 " any of these, either *Typical* or *Prophe-*
 " *tical* Passages; there is one very fair
 " and reasonable Key to be made use of,
 " which immediately opens and solve
 " them all; which is that the Kingdom
 " of the *Messiah*, to which God requires
 " all Mankind to be subject, is not a *tem-*
 " *poral*, but a *spiritual Kingdom*; Joh.
 " xviii. 36. And therefore that all such
 " Passages as relate to *Him*, and are not
 " capable of a *literal* Interpretation, are
 " to be understood in a *spiritual* Sense.
 " Let us take, I say, but this one easy and
 " rational Supposition with us, and the
 " whole System of *Types* and *Prophecies*
 " that occur in the *Old Testament*, con-
 " cerning the *Messiah*, will easily and fair-
 " ly be cleared up by it.

" Thus, for Example, altho' in a strict
 " and literal Sense it cannot be said that
 " our blessed Saviour *sate upon the Throne*
 " *of David, and upon his Kingdom to order*
 " *it*: Is. ix. 7. Because he was no tempo-
 " ral Prince, as the other in his Time
 " had been; Yet it is a sufficient fulfil-
 " ling of this Part of that *Prophecy*, that
 " he, who in his *Human Nature* was
 " both the legal and natural Son of *Da-*
 " *vid*,

“ *vid*, was appointed as a *spiritual* King
 “ for ever to rule over the People of
 “ God. Thus also, tho’ literally he might
 “ be called *the Seed of the Woman*; Gen.
 “ iii. 15. because he was conceived and
 “ born of a pure Virgin; yet *his bruising*
 “ *of the Serpent’s Head, and the Serpent’s*
 “ *bruising his Heel* is mystically [or spiri-
 “ tually] to be understood of *his destroy-*
 “ *ing the Works of the Devil*: 1 Joh. iii. 8.
 “ and of the Sufferings and Temptations
 “ wherewith the Devil assaulted him,
 “ and continues to do the like more or
 “ less, to all Christians, who are the
 “ Members of his mystical Body *the*
 “ *Church*. And after the same Manner
 “ all other the like Difficulties, that any
 “ Way occur in the Prophecies concern-
 “ ing the *Messiah*, may, I think, most
 “ easily and fairly be solved; as will
 “ abundantly appear to every one, who
 “ seriously and impartially compares
 “ them all, with the History of our blef-
 “ sed Saviour’s Conception, Birth, Life,
 “ Death, Resurrection, and Ascension in-
 “ to Heaven, together with the Descent
 “ of the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles
 “ and Disciples, and the consequent
 “ Propagation of the Gospel throughout
 “ all the known Parts of the World.

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" I need not therefore so far enlarge
 " this Discourse, as to go through the
 " Particulars of these *Types* and *Prophe-*
 " *cies*, and to shew how that very many
 " of them are *literally*, the rest of them
 " *spiritually*, and all of them *fairly* and
 " *rationaly* accomplished in our blessed
 " Lord and Saviour *Jesus*: But taking
 " the Sum of the Argument together,
 " I think it must have very great Force
 " upon all unprejudiced Minds, if we
 " thus put it into Form.

" A great Number of *Types*, *Prefigu-*
 " *rations*, and *Prophecies*, in several and
 " distant Ages, some of them very plain,
 " and all of them so pointing one Way,
 " as to beget in the whole Nation of the
 " *Jews* an Expectation of the coming of
 " a *Messiah*; And lastly, all of them, in
 " due Time, fairly and coherently fulfil-
 " led in one and the same Person; all
 " this, I say, could be the Effect of no
 " other Wisdom or Foresight but that
 " of *God*; and consequently the Person,
 " in whom all these were fulfilled, ought
 " to be look'd upon as that very *Messi-*
 " *ab*, who was promised, and according-
 " ly sent by God into the World.

" But all this is come to pass in the
 " Person of our blessed Lord and Saviour
 " *Jesus*.

" There-

“Therefore he is the *Messiah* or *Christ*,
 “who was promised, and accordingly
 “sent into the World by God. And
 “if thus much is once granted; the
 “Consequence will not be denied, that
 “therefore that Religion which was
 “taught by him in Person, and after-
 “wards by those who were commission-
 “ed by him, is to be look’d upon as
 “coming from God, and of divine
 “Authority.”

Some small Part of the *Old Testament*
 (small, I say, if compared with the whole)
 is taken up in giving an Account of the
ceremonial and *judicial Observances*, which
 God had prescribed to the People of *Is-
 rael*, and to them alone. Concerning
 these Things we need not be solicitous,
 because, under the *Gospel*, we are all set
 free from the Obligation of them. But
 yet we should not be wholly Strangers
 to those Places of the *Bible* which treat
 of them: Partly because there are Mat-
 ters of Piety and Morality interspersed
 with them, and partly to make us
 thankful to God, that he has been gra-
 ciously pleased to deliver the *Christian
 Church* from so heavy a Burthen.

Besides the Precepts of *Virtue* and *Pie-
 ty* the Observation of all which is neces-
 sary

ary to our eternal Happiness; there are many Rules of *moral Prudence*, by keeping close to which the Life of Man may be made more easy and comfortable in this uncertain World. These you may gather from many Places of the *Holy Scripture*. Particularly read the Books of the *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes* (but read them with Attention) and there you will find them collected, with many other Things that lead to the most exalted Piety and Virtue. Add to these the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* (but read it also with Attention) and there you will find these Rules farther explained and inculcated.

Divine Poetry, or pious and exalted Sense conceived in proper Words and a poetick Style, (tho' perhaps not strictly in Verse) is of great Efficacy to raise the Mind of a Devout Man to the Contemplation of God, his Attributes, Laws, and Providence; which, to such a Man, is a most rational, delightful, and instructive Exercise; and every Way fit for a religious and good Man. Read the Book of *Psalms*, the Book of *Job*, the several Hymns (or *Songs*, as they are called) in several Parts of the *Scripture*, and the exalted Strains that are to be found in *Isaiah* and others of the Prophets, (but read

read them with a devout Mind) and there you will find such a Treasure of these divine Contemplations, as cannot but warm you, and stir you up to every Thing that is good, virtuous and pious.

To conclude ; if, by constant and attentive Reading and Meditation, you render the *Holy Scriptures* familiar to you ; in them you will find such a Number of Passages Historical, Prophetical, Moral, Political, Poetical, Oratorical, Literal, and Parabolical ; as will every Day render the Study of them more and more both delightful and useful to you. It was aptly said by one of the Ancients, *The Holy Scriptures are an Ocean, where in the Mouse may wade, and the Elephant swim with Pleasure and Profit.*

The Importance of the Subject, which I have chosen, has carried me out into a greater Length than at first I intended. However I cannot make an end, without adding a Word of Advice touching the right Manner of studying the *Holy Scriptures*.

Some there are, who lay themselves under an Obligation daily to read such a Number of *Psalms* and *Chapters* of the *Bible* ; for which I am far from blaming them. But what I complain of is, That they

they look upon this as a *Task*, and therefore often make too much haste to fulfil it; which makes them read with little Attention, and consequently with little Benefit to themselves.

Whenever you set yourself to such Reading (as I hope you constantly will do) first, recollect your Thoughts, and consider what it is that you are going to do, and for what End and Purpose it is or ought to be. It ought not to be barely to furnish you with Matter for Discourse (which is the Case of too many) but to make you become wiser and better; or else all your reading will be of small Value.

In the next Place; lift up your Heart to God (*From whom every good and perfect Gift cometh.* Jam. i. 17.) and beseech him to enlighten your Mind, that you may understand as much of his *Holy Word*, as may be for your Soul's Benefit.

And lastly; dwell most upon those Places which are plain (of which there are a Multitude) that if well attended to, will teach you every Thing to be believed and done, in order to your eternal Salvation, which you always ought to have in View.

I will

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I will now add no more: But beseeching God that what I have written may be of real Benefit to you, and every Man who reads it,

I am,

Yours, &c.

F I N I S.



SOME
RULES
FOR THE
CONDUCT
OF
HUMAN LIFE.

By Dr. *EDWARD SYNGE*,
late Lord Archbishop of Tuam in Ireland.

(Price 3 d. or 20 s. a Hundred.)

ADVERTISEMENT

UPON taking up the Thoughts of this small Work, I soon perceived that it would be a more easy and pleasant (and I hope not a less useful) Task, to take the Purport and Design of my Author's Rules, and to express them in Words of my own (sometimes contracting, enlarging, or adding to them) rather than make an exact Translation of them. The Rules are certainly good: God grant that they may be put in Practice.

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SOME
R U L E S
FOR THE
C O N D U C T
O F
H U M A N L I F E,

Chiefly done from the Latin of

J. A. COMENIUS:

Shewing the Way of Living

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|--------------------------------|--|
| I. Wisely. | V. In much Bu-
siness. |
| II. Harmoniously. | VI. In the Inter-
vals of Business. |
| III. Peaceably and
quietly. | VII. In Travel. |
| IV. In Business. | |

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Dr. EDWARD SYNGE,

Late Lord Archbishop of Tuam in Ireland.

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T H E

AUTHOR'S Dedication.

S I R,

U P O N your taking Leave of me, and of my House, where you have so long been my well-beloved Scholar and Boarder; you are pleas'd to desire me to give you some Rules, for the Conduct of your whole Life, to be always retained in your Memory: And of this, you say, you are the more desirous, because your Father designs, when you have taken a View of your own Country, to send you abroad to travel, where you expect to meet with great Variety of Conversation; and

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therefore

therefore would be careful to avoid those Snares which sometimes perhaps may be laid for you.

If you take Care (as I doubt not but you will) to recollect and remember those Documents which I have all along endeavoured to imprint in the Hearts of all my Scholars, and if you constantly pray to God for his Grace, that you may, upon all proper Occasions, put them in Practice; you will not stand in Need of any such written Memorial as you seem to desire. However, that I may not be wanting in any thing whereby it may be in my Power to do you real Service, I here send you the Sum and Substance of those Rules which you have oftentimes heard me explain and inculcate.

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SOME
R U L E S
FOR THE
C O N D U C T
O F
HUMAN LIFE, &c.

I. RULES *for leading a wise*
Life.

ALL other sublunary living Creatures are governed by those *In-*
stincts which God our great Creator,
has implanted in their several Natures.

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Which

Which *Instincts* they are not able of themselves to resist or controul, altho' some of them are sometimes by the Art of Man taught so to do. But *Wisdom*, is a Qualification belonging to Man alone; who, in this respect is the Image (tho' but a faint one) of God, who is infinitely *wise*. By *Wisdom*, or some Share of it, Man is enabled to guide and govern his natural Desires and Inclinations; which otherwise would, like a Torrent, hurry him into many Inconveniences and Evils here, and into eternal Damnation hereafter. All which if you would avoid, let it be your first care to be as *wise* as you are capable of being. In order to which observe these Rules:

RULE I. Whatever you at any time intend to do, consider the *End* which you therein propose to yourself: And be sure that it be always really good, or at least innocent. He who does any thing, and knows not
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why or wherefore, acts *foolishly* : And he who aims at an unlawful End, acts *wickedly* ; which is the worst Sort of *Folly*. If you are always careful to observe this fundamental Rule ; you will thereby avoid many Sins, which would disturb your Conscience, and also many trifling Actions, which would tend to your Discredit, or perhaps trouble your Repose.

RULE 2. When you have thus fixt upon a proper *End* to aim at in each Action ; then consider not only what are the lawful *Means* to be used in order to this *End*, but also how and in what Manner these *Means* are best to be applied and made use of. That which is unlawful ought not to be done, even for the obtaining of a good *End* : *Rom. iii. 8.* And *Means*, in themselves good, have often failed of Success, for want of Prudence in the Management of them.

RULE 3. When you are seeking for a good *End*, proper *Means*, and the right Way of *using them*; remember that the Knowledge of all this must not rest in idle Speculation, or plausible Discourse; but ought to be effectually reduced to Practice, as often as you have an Opportunity for it. That Man who thinks wisely, and discourses judiciously, is never to be excused, if his Practice, when there is Occasion for it, be not answerable to his Thoughts and Words. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin.* Jam. iv. 17. *And that Servant who knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes,* Luke xii. 47.

Take the Sum and Substance of these three Rules in short. Let the *End* you aim at be always good. Be vigorous in making use of the proper *Means* for the compassing such an *End*.

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End. And in doing this be always very *circumspect*. If you still proceed after this Manner, you will certainly obtain the great End which you propose to yourself in the Life to come : And if you are short of some Things which you desire in this World, you will have this Comfort, that God thinks fit to deny them to you, not for any Fault of yours ; but for other good Reasons, which he knows, tho' you do not.

RULE. 4. Since our Life here is short and uncertain ; and the Pleasures of it (beside that at best they afford but small Satisfaction) are always intermixt with Doubts, Fears, and Sorrows of one Kind or other ; and since, after it, there is a Life to come, which is to last to Eternity ; a wise Man will never propose the Joys, Pleasures, or Prosperity of this transitory World, as the ultimate *End* of all, or indeed of any of his Actions ; but will always look beyond

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it, and make it his great (I may say his only) Business to secure his Happiness in that other Life, upon which he must soon and unavoidably enter. *O that they were wise, that they understood this; that they would consider their latter End!* Deut. xxxii. 29. *So teach us to number our Days that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.* Psal. xc. 12. "Eternity is an
 "End, beyond which there can be
 "nothing: And therefore, whilst we
 "have Time, we ought to make due
 "Provision for it: This being the
 "only true *Wisdom*."

RULE 5. Since Death is the only unavoidable Passage into Eternity; a wise Man will make it the constant Business of his Life that he may *die well*, and that Death may prove to him a Passage, not into eternal Misery, but into everlasting Happiness. He who is careless of this, it had been much better for him never to have been born.

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RULE 6. The only sure Way thus —
 to *dye well*, and at Peace with God, is
 to *live well*. It is a foolish Thing to
 rely upon what is very improperly
 call'd a *Death-bed Repentance*, to
 which God has made no Promise.
 "Repentance consists in a Reforma-
 "tion of Life; and what an absurd
 "Thing is it for a Man to pretend
 "to *reform his Life*, when his Life
 "itself is just at an End."

RULE 7. To *live well* is to be
 constantly obedient to God's Com-
 mands, and never *willing* to do or
 desire any thing that is contrary to
 any of them.

RULE 8. In order to this you must
 be careful to know what these Com-
 mands are, and to form a right No-
 tion of every one of them; without
 which you cannot give due Obedi-
 ence to them. For which Reason
 you, who have been brought up to
 Letters, are obliged to be diligent in
 the Study of the *Holy Scriptures*,
 where

where all God's Commands are plainly recorded and set forth. Or if you were wholly illiterate, yet still it would be your Duty to make the best Enquiry you could what are the several Things which God, your supreme Lord and Judge, requires from you. *Whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise; think on these Things.* Phil. iv. 8.

RULE 9. Arm yourself, and often beg of God to arm you with a fixt and firm Resolution that neither Hope, nor Fear, nor Shame, nor Hatred, nor Love of any Person or Thing shall at any Time put you by from doing what you know to be your Duty, or prevail with you to commit what you know or suspect to be a Sin. " *Reason is as the Rudder wherewith you* " *steer*

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“steer your Course; and *Religion* the
 “Compass or North-star, by which
 “you are to guide it: But *Resolution*
 “is the Wind that must set you for-
 “ward; and without it your Sails will
 “often flag.” Every Morning there-
 fore beg of God to instil this *Resolu-
 tion* into you, and often renew it in
 the Course of each Day. *Fear not*
them which kill the Body, but are not
able to kill the Soul: But rather fear
Him which is able to destroy both
Soul and Body in Hell. Mat. x. 28.
Whosoever shall be ashamed of me,
and of my Words, in this adulterous
and sinful Generation; of him also
shall the Son of Man be ashamed,
when he cometh in the Glory of his
Father with the Holy Angels. Mar.
 viii. 38. *I have sworn, and I will*
perform it, that I will keep thy
righteous Judgments. Psal. cxix.
 106. *We ought to obey God rather*
than Men. Acts v. 29.

RULE

RULE 10. *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Mat. v. 16. But take not the least Praise to yourself, for any thing which you do, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give Glory. Psal. cxv. 1. Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? 1 Cor. iv. 7. To deserve the Love and Good-will of those who know you, may well be a Satisfaction, and, in many Cases, of Use to you. But “the Praise of Men is an empty Bubble, and so far from being of any “real Benefit, that it serves only “to puff up those, who are fond of it “with Pride and Vanity, and therefore “by make them odious to God, and “despicable in the Sight even of those “who praise them.”*

II. RULES

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II. RULES *for leading an harmonious Life.*

H*Armony* in Musick is such an Agreement between the Notes that are sounded by Voices or Instruments as renders the whole Composition delightful to the Ear. Where this Agreement is wanting, the Sound of the Notes is not *Harmony*, but Jarring. And wherever there is such an Agreement between Things or Persons, as makes the Consideration thereof pleasant to a good and judicious Man ; this also, by an easy Metaphor, we call *Harmony*.

Such an *Harmony* as this there is between all the Works of God, where it is not disturbed by the evil Practices of Men. *The Lord by Wisdom hath founded the Earth ; by Understanding hath he established the Heaven.* Prov. iii. 19. Such an *Harmony* there is between

tween righteous and good Men in their mutual Intercourse one with the other. *Behold how good and pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.* Psal. cxxxiii. 1. And such an *Harmony* there is in the Mind of every truly righteous Man, as often as he considers the Agreement that is between his own Thoughts, Desires, Words, and Actions in that which is good. *Our Rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World.* 2 Cor. i. 12.

Now that you may not contribute to the disturbing of this *Harmony*, either within yourself, or in or with others; observe not only the Rules of a *wise Life*, which I have already laid down, but also these that follow.

RULE I. Take care to fix right Principles well in your Mind. For
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Want of which, Men are often various and unsteady in their Actions, and uneasy to themselves and others. Therefore

RULE 2. When you have well fixt your Principles, be sure always to speak and act according to them; and never to vary from them, for the Sake of *Party* or any other worldly Consideration. For thus doing, God, your own Conscience, and good Men will approve of you : Nor ought you to be moved at the Censures of Fools or wicked Men.

RULE 3. Whatever you do or speak, let it always be done in its proper Order, and in a Manner suitable to the Thing itself. For Example: That which is of greatest Importance, let it first be taken Care of. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.* Mat. vi. 33. Let serious Things be spoken and done seriously. Let good and friendly Offices be performed with Charity and Good-will:

Not

Not grudgingly or of Necessity: 2 Cor. ix. 7. And the like I may say of all other your Words and Actions; which, when they are not only good but also suitable to the Importance which they do, or ought to carry in them, are pleasant to be beheld and observed: But when there is an Incongruity between the Thing spoken or done, and the Manner of speaking or doing it, it becomes more or less nauseous, and sometimes ridiculous. Dead Flies cause the Ointment of the Apothecary to send forth a stinking Savour: So doth a little Folly him that is in Reputation for Wisdom and Honour. Eccl. x. 1.

RULE 4. Be in Reality what you are willing to be thought to be. Every Man desires to be thought honest, just, and virtuous, that hereby he may gain Love and Good-will from all that know him. Now the only sure way to be thought so is really to be so. "Hypocrisy may for a
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“ while deceive the World : But in a
 “ little Time it will be detected, and
 “ render an Hypocrite odious to
 “ Men, as he always is to God.”

RULE 5. If you would preserve a
 delightful *Harmony* in your own
 Mind, and the like between your-
 self and all with whom you have any
 Intercourse, possess your Mind with
 an universal sincere Love for all Man-
 kind, Friends, Strangers, and even
 Enemies, if you have any. If you
 cannot always do this for *their* Sakes,
 who are of the same Nature with
 you ; yet do it for the Sake of God,
 your Creator, who commands it,
 and of *Christ* your Redeemer, who,
while we were yet Sinners (and there-
 by Enemies) *died for us.* Rom. v. 8.
 Root out and banish from your Mind
 all Envy, Malice, Hatred, and Ill-
 nature. These are the Storms and
 Tempests of the Soul, and the chief
 Causes of all those Hurricanes which
 disturb the World ; in which I hope
 you

you will have no Share. *Let all Bitterness and Wrath, and Anger and Clamour, and evil Speaking be put away from you, with all Malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's Sake hath forgiven you.* Eph. iv. 31, 32. Particularly never be angry with a Man, and much less hate him, for being of a different Perswasion from you in Matters of Religion. *The Servant of the Lord must not strive* (except it be by the Strength of his Arguments) *but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient; in Meekness instructing those that opposeth themselves.* 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. In many Cases you innocently may, and sometimes you ought by lawful Means, to defend yourself from an Injury: But never do or say any thing beyond what is necessary for your own just Defence, or by way of Revenge. *Dearly Beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place*

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place unto *Wrath*. For it is written, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.* Therefore if thine Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him *Drink*: For in so doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his Head, (and, it may be, melt him down into Love and Friendship.) Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good. Rom. xii. 19, &c. "Scarce any Man is capable of hating another, who, he finds, sincerely loves him."

RULE 6. Easiness and innocent Pleasantry in Conversation very much tends to maintain *Harmony* and good Agreement among those who converse together. Let this therefore always be your Care, in whatever Company you shall be: Let your Discourse, in your Turn, be rational, and your Wit always harmless. Abstain from all biting and satyrical Jests and Speeches. "There is no Man but will take it ill to be set in an odious
" or

“ or ridiculous Light ; altho’ it be
“ but in Sport.”

RULE 7. Be always ready, to your Power, to relieve the Poor, and help the distressed. This will give great Delight to your Mind, and gain you the Good-will of all that know you. Remember the Fortune you enjoy is not your own but God’s. He is the Proprietor, you are only the Steward of it, and must one Day give a strict Account of your Stewardship. “ If therefore in your Account there
“ be many large Articles for Things
“ that are unnecessary and might
“ have been spared, and but a few
“ small ones for the Relief of the
“ Poor, the Fatherless and the Widow ; can you ever hope to receive the Reward of a faithful
“ Steward or Servant ? ”

III. RULES

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III. RULES *for leading a quiet Life.*

AN *harmonious Life* I take to be much, if not altogether the same with a *quiet Life*. However; it may not be amiss to add two or three Rules under this last Title.

Quietness is either inward, in a Man's own Mind; or outward, in being at Peace with other Men. Both these, when they are fully enjoyed, contribute highly to the Happiness of Man: And that you may enjoy them both, I hope the following Rules will be of Service to you:

RULE I. Be well content with your own Condition, whatsoever it is. Endeavour, by honest Labour and Industry to make your Circumstances better than they are, for the Good both of yourself and others. But if such your Endeavours do not meet with Success; or if heavy Afflictions

afflictions bear hard upon you; remember that God governs the World by a particular Providence, that *a Sparrow does not fall on the Ground without him*: Mat. x. 29. That *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*: Heb. xii. 6. That *it is good for us to be afflicted, that we may learn his Statutes*: Psal. cxix. 71. Remember all this (I say) and more that might be added, both from *Reason* and *Holy Scripture*, to the like Purpose. "Bear your Afflictions patiently, and make the right Use of them, and hope for a blessed Reward in the Life to come."

RULE 2. *Exercise yourself to have always a Conscience void of Offence toward God and toward Men*: Acts xxiv. 16. This will give you Quietness in your own Mind; and the Fault will not be yours if you are not at Peace with all Men; which will be a great Satisfaction to you.

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RULE 3. Engage your self in no more Business than what you find yourself able to go through with. The Want of this Caution has made the Life of many a Man uneasy and unquiet.

RULE 4. Meddle not with the Affairs of any other Man, which do not belong to you, except it be at his own Desire, to do him a charitable or friendly Office; and this without doing any Manner of Wrong to another. It is a very unacceptable Thing to be *a Busy-body in other Mens Matters*, either by Word or Deed; 1 Pet. iv. 15. Therefore *study to be quiet, and to do your own Business*: 1 Theff. iv. 11.

RULE 5. Engage not in any Party Quarrels (whether publick or private) any farther than the Laws of God or your Country oblige you, lest you be crushed between them.

RULE 6. Fly from the first Motions of every Temptation to Sin;

and take Sanctuary in good Thoughts, good Employment, good Books, or good and virtuous Company. The surest Way to keep yourself pure and unspotted is to flie from Temptation. If you cannot flie, call God to your Assistance, and arm yourself with a firm Resolution to resist: and always be upon your Guard that you be not surprised. *Watch and pray that ye enter not into Temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.* Mat. xxvi. 41. “ It is much better to keep yourself clean, than to suffer yourself to be polluted, because possibly you may again be washed. It is much safer not to be wounded, than afterwards to be healed with a Scar left behind, and to keep your Enemy at a distance, than to engage with him, when the Victory is uncertain.”

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IV. RULES *for a* Life of Bu- siness.

RULE I. Lead not an idle Life; but find out some honest Business (private or publick, or both) wherein constantly to employ yourself, and whereby you may do good both to yourself and others. Consider what Business you are fitted for, and set yourself to it with Diligence: But undertake no more than what you are well able to perform; lest you come off with Shame and Sorrow. Idleness will betray you to many Evils and Inconveniencies, and entitle you to no other Rewards but that dismal one of *the unprofitable Servant*: Mat. xxv. 30. Therefore "endeavour, as much as you can, always to be doing something which is good."

RULE 2. Be not *slotful* in Business: Rom. xii. 11. For that is much the same with Idleness, and some-

times worse than it. But when you have a fair Prospect of doing what is good, and rightly understand the Ways and Means of performing it; go on with Resolution, until you have compleated it. You may possibly sometimes be defeated in a good Purpose: But it is your Duty to attempt it, whenever you find a reasonable Probability of Success.

RULE 3. When you find yourself well able to do a good Thing without the Assistance of any one but God; never put it or any Part of it off to be done by any other Man, of whose Honesty, Sufficiency, and Industry you cannot be so sure as, in such a Case, you may be of your own. "But if you find that you
 " want the Help of others, let not
 " the Vanity of having all the Praise
 " to yourself make you decline it;
 " lest the Good you aim at may
 " thereby be lost."

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RULE 4. When you find yourself able to perform a good Work to Day; do not put it off till to Morrow. *Laziness* is a Sort of *Idleness*; and many a good Undertaking has failed by unnecessary Delay, as well as by overmuch Haste. *Ye know not what shall be on the Morrow: Jam. iv.*

14. *Thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth: Prov. xxvii. 1.* Therefore *whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might. Eccles. ix. 10.*

RULE 5. *Lawful Gain* may and ought in many Cases to be made. For without this few Men would be able to support themselves and their Families, or to do much Good to others. But let not *Gain* (however lawful) be the chief Motive for your undertaking any Business, whether publick or private; if you are greedy of *Gain*, it will often mislead you; *They that will be rich fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many*

B 4. *foolish*

foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition. For the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

Your great Aim, in undertaking any Sort of Business, ought always to be to please God by doing Good in the World. Keep this constantly in your View, and it will always lead you in the right Way. But if you look aside after *Gain*, you will continually be in Danger of being misled. Among other Qualifications of a righteous Man, this is one, that *he despiseth the Gain of Oppressions*: Isai. xxxiii. 15. That is to say, all *Gain* but what is just and honest. "*Gain*" is a very strong Temptation; against which therefore you must be very watchful and upon your "*Guard*."

V. RULES
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V. RULES *for a* Life in a Multitude of Business.

RULE I. If very much Business unavoidably comes at once upon you, be not discouraged; for that will make you negligent; but consider how to put it into the best Order; that one Thing may be done after another, or without hindring each other.

RULE 2. Be always a good Manager of your Time, and lay hold of each Opportunity that offers for the doing of whatever is necessary to be done. If you neglect a proper Opportunity, you may not perhaps meet with it again: Whereas, by dexterously laying hold of it whenever it offers, you will be able in a little Time to dispatch much Business.

RULE 3. Always consider the probable Consequences of what you intend

tend to do; that you may guard against those which are evil or inconvenient. "A Thing may at first
 "Sight look very plausibly; but if
 "we look well to what may follow
 "from it, we may find good Reasons for laying it aside, or at least
 "for altering our Measures."

RULE 4. Consult with yourself, and with others who are knowing and honest, about every thing of Moment which you are to undertake; but waste not that Time in unprofitable Discourse about it, which may be better employed in doing it. Thought is quick: And when a wise Man is once well informed (of which he will take Care) he will not be long in deliberating what is best to be done: But many a good Opportunity has been lost by too much Consultation about it. "A wise Man thinks
 "much, which is soon done, but
 "speaks no more than what is necessary,
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“fary, being a good Husband of his
 “Time, which is very precious.”

RULE 5. Where you are not able
 to finish a Business without the Help
 of others; call in speedily such Per-
 sons to your Assistance, as are fit to
 be employed in it. “The more
 “Hands are employed, the more
 “Work is done; provided they are
 “managed in such good Order as
 “not to be a Hindrance to one an-
 “other.”

RULE 6. Take some proper Times
 to relax your Thoughts from all Bu-
 siness; that you may be the better
 able to return to it. A heavy Load,
 constantly born without any Inter-
 mission, will waste your Strength,
 and make you unfit for every Thing,

VI. RULES *for the* Intervals of
 Buſineſs. *At ſuch Seasons*
as theſe;

RULE I. Divert yourſelf with reading ſome pleaſant and innocent Books (ſuch as Hiſtory, Poetry, &c.) which at the ſame Time may entertain and inſtruct you, without much Labour of Thought. But beware of all ſuch Books, Poems, &c. as are profane, lewd, or debauched. Theſe may well be compared to delightful Poiſon. There may be Wit in them; but if you read them, they will inſenſibly corrupt both your Morals and Principles. Therefore avoid them wholly.

RULE 2. Entertain yourſelf ſometimes with a few agreeable Friends (too many at once will encumber you) and chuſe ſuch as are Men of Virtue, good Humour, and good Senſe; from

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whose Conversation and Behaviour you may learn, or be confirmed in something that is good. Shun Flatterers, who, for some little Ends of their own, will soothe and encourage you in every Thing you say or do, whether it be right or wrong: And shew yourself always pleased with honest Men, who will speak their Minds freely, and admonish you of whatever you do amiss.

RULE 3. Sometimes make a little Excursion to your Estate in the Country: Take a View of the Improvements which are there going on; and give Directions to your Workmen about them.

RULE 4. Use moderate Exercise, such as Hunting, Hawking, Fowling, Fishing, But be not foolishly expensive in such Things as these. If they are discreetly used, they will contribute to your Health: But make them not your Business, but only sometimes your Diversion.

RULE

RULE 5. There may be no Harm in sometimes playing a Game at Chess, Draughts, Cards or Dice, with an agreeable Friend. But never play for any thing that is considerable, or more than what you or your Friend may lose or win without any Manner of Concern. Spend not much Time in this Sort of Diversion. "It may be sometimes innocent; but is wholly unprofitable, whenever we have the Opportunity of better employing ourselves."

VII. RULES to be observed by a Traveller.

I Own that I see no Necessity, in your Circumstances, of your Travelling (or at least so soon) out of your own Country. You may in a more easy Way, learn from Books all that is useful for you to know touching all the Parts of the World. But since you

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you have an earnest Desire, and are encouraged by your Father, in this Way to gratify an innocent Curiosity; take the following Rules with you.

RULES I. I have already told you that a wise Man does every thing for some *good End*. In the first Place therefore propose to yourself the *right End* for which you travel. It is not, at least it ought not to be, barely to see new Countries, Cities, Rivers, Men, &c. This may be an innocent, but it is an useless Curiosity. It may furnish you with Matter for Table-Talk when you return Home, but will be of no farther Service to you. “The only Reason, why such a Man as you should travel, is to learn something whereby he may become better, wiser, and more serviceable to his Country. If this be not the *End* you propose; your Travelling will be but Labour lost, and Money thrown away, that may be better employed.”

RULE

RULE 2. Wherever you come (whether at home or abroad) contract no Manner of Acquaintance, and much less Familiarity, with ignorant, empty, or vicious Persons; from whom you can learn Nothing but Vice or Folly. But endeavour as much as you can always to keep Company with Men of the best Knowledge, Learning and Virtue; who may inform you of the History, Antiquities, Laws, Religion, and Polity of each Country, together with the Arts and Sciences that flourish in it: And this without any Danger of corrupting either your Principles or Morals. These Things will be really useful to be known, and will help to make you both wiser and better. But the Fashions of Apparel or Equipage, with the little trifling Customs of many People, &c. are hardly worth the Observation of a Man of Sense; except it be sometimes for a little innocent Amusement or Diversion.

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RULE 3. Wherever you are, take great Care always to keep your Passions under your Command. Let your Passions ever be guided by your Reason, but never a Guide to it. "Passions (like Fire and Water) are good Servants, but very bad Masters. And if you suffer them, or any of them (especially Anger) to lead your Reason; they will often betray you to say and do such Things, as sometimes will disoblige others and create you Enemies, and sometimes expose you to Scorn or Contempt."

RULE 4. Wherever you go, remember that you are a *Christian*; and be neither afraid nor ashamed to speak and act like one; *Be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you.* 1 Pet. iii. 15. This I know you are well able to do: But take Care to do it *with Meekness and Fear*, as the Text adds; or with
Reverence,

Reverence, as it is rendred in the Margin: And still without the Affe-
 ctation of being thought a Saint, lest
 the Company take you for a Hypo-
 crite. But be not fond of entering in-
 to Disputations concerning the con-
 troverted Points, which by many are
 adopted into their Religion, and of
 which you may be wholly ignorant
 without any Hazard of your Salva-
 tion. Such Disputations may engage
 you in Quarrels in a strange Country,
 but seldom do much good.

RULE 5. In a Christian Country,
 where you understand the Language,
 shew your Charity by communica-
 ting with the established Church, if
 it may be done without Sin. You can-
 not indeed without Sin communicate
 with the Church of *Rome*. But there
 are other Christian Churches whose
 Communion is innocent, and there-
 fore ought not to be renounced on
 Account of something that may be
 wanting in them.

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RULE 6. Take great Care of your Health: And for that Reason, as well as upon a Principle of Conscience, be strictly sober and temperate in eating and drinking. Intemperance is the Cause of many Diseases. Sickness is always a melancholy Condition; but more so in a strange Country; and most of all so, when it is caused by a Man's own Irregularity or Intemperance.

I will not now burthen your Memory with more Rules. Have God in all your Thoughts, and be diligent in the Study of his holy Word, and in Prayer to him. And may he preserve and direct you.

I am Yours, &c.

POSTSCRIPT.

P O S T S C R I P T.

TO sum up all. Wherever you
are or shall be;

I. Live to God; who is the Author and Giver of Life, both here and hereafter.

II. Live to a good Conscience which I may call the Life of Life.

III. Live to your good Name and Reputation; which will be an Example to others whilst you live here, and after you are departed this Life.

Read these Rules often, and with such Attention as may imprint the Purport of them in your Memory. You will undoubtedly add many particular Rules to them: But let not these be forgot. A Rule that is forgotten is altogether useless.

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A N
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ON FOOLISH

Questions in Religion.

A N O T H E R O N

Contending for the FAITH of it.

Being the SUBSTANCE of

Two Visitation Sermons,

Preached by the Most Reverend

Dr. EDWARD SYNGE,

late Lord Archbishop of *Tuam* in Ireland.

*While Men slept, his Enemy came and sowed
Tares among the Wheat, and went his Way.*

MAT. xiii. 25.

The SECOND EDITION, Corrected.

L O N D O N,

Printed for THOMAS TRYE near Grays-Inn Gate
in Holborn, MDCCXLVIII.

[Price Six Pence, or Two Guineas a Hundred.]

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TO THE
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*I*WELL remember a short Speech
of a late noble Earl, to this Purpose :

“ Christianity (said he) is a Religion every Way agreeable to the Nature and Attributes of God, and conducing to the Happiness of Man, both here and for ever hereafter, if learned Men would let us have it just as *Christ* and his Apostles delivered it.” See ACT. x. 35.

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Questions in Religion.

2 Tim. ii. 23. *Foolish and unlearned Questions avoid.*

The Context from the Beginning of the preceding Verse, runs thus :

Flee also youthful Lusts ; but follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart ; but foolish and unlearned Questions avoid, knowing that they do gender Strifes.

I N these Words St. Paul lays down a short, but very comprehensive Rule for all Bishops and Pastors of the Christian Church, as well as for *Timothy*, to whom this Epistle was immediately directed ;

rected; teaching us all what we are to *avoid*, as well as what we are to *follow*.

Would we know what is the Mark or Scope, which we must always propose to ourselves, and still keep in view through the whole Course of our Ministry? We have here a plain and full Answer: *Follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart*. In like Manner, would we be forewarned of those Things, which are not only in themselves sinful, but also most likely to render all our Labours in the Gospel ineffectual, that we may take Care to keep ourselves free from them? The Apostle here also gives us, for this Purpose, a double Direction: *First*, that we should flee *youthful Lusts*; by which he means not only Luxury or Sensuality, but also Pride, Ambition, Arrogance, Contempt of others, and such like Inclinations; which he calls by the Name of *youthful Lusts*, because they are apt to be more predominant in those who are *young*, than in such as are grown wiser by Age and Experience.

Then *Secondly*, that we should *avoid foolish and unlearned Questions*; for which he subjoins an unanswerable Reason; namely, that such Questions were so far from contributing any Thing toward the great Design of the Gospel Ministry, of which
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he had just before spoken, that, on the contrary, they were directly opposite to, and destructive of it ; as being really of no other Use but only to *gender Strife* and Contention ; and thereby not only to perplex the Minds of Men (which must needs be prejudicial to the Faith of a Christian) but also to set them at Enmity one against another, to the Ruin of Peace and Charity. Now the whole Context being much too large a Subject for one single Discourse of this Sort ; I have made choice of a small Part of it only, at present to be handled in the Words read unto you for my Text : *Foolish and unlearned Questions avoid.*

That *foolish* and *unlearned* here are only two Words put exactly to denote one and the same Thing, is too plain to need any Proof. And therefore, that I may keep my Discourse as free from Embarrassment as I can, I shall only retain the former of these Epithets, and speak of *foolish Questions*. For the due handling of which Subject, as proposed in my Text, I shall endeavour to shew,

First, What we are here to understand by *foolish Questions*: Or what sort of *Questions* they are, which truly and properly come under this Denomination.

And *Secondly*, How far such *Questions* are to be *avoided*.

As to the former of these: Whatsoever appears to be *altogether unserviceable to any good End*, such a Thing is always accounted to be *absolutely and positively foolish*. Thus, for Example, to plough the barren Sand, to beat the Air, to winnow Chaff in which there is not the least Mixture of Grain, or to do any such Action that is altogether unprofitable: If the *Matter* be directly *considered*, and in its own proper Nature, is for ever justly to be taxed with *Folly*. And this is one Reason that wicked Men are so often in the Holy Scriptures called by the Appellation of *Fools*; namely, because *Sin*, directly and in its own Nature considered, cannot be supposed to serve any good End or Purpose: It may indeed delude a Man with a vain Expectation, but in Truth and Reality it no way conduces to his Happiness, either here or hereafter; and therefore most truly deserves the Name of *Folly*.

Again, when a Man proposes any certain *End* to himself, if the *Means* which he makes use of in order thereunto are altogether improper and unfit for his Design: Such *Means*, however, upon another Occasion to use them, may be an Argument

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gument of *Wisdom*, yet, with respect to that particular *End* which is so proposed, must be look'd upon as *foolish*. For Example, although it is a Piece of Prudence in him who has a *House* to build, to provide Brick, Stone, and Mortar beforehand for it; yet he who should make Provision of such Sort of Materials for the Building of a *Ship*, would certainly incur the Censure of great *Folly*.

From what I have already said, it will follow, that however wise or prudent a Thing may appear to be, *with a particular Respect to this or that certain End or Design*; yet the same Thing considered with another View, may justly be reckoned to be most palpably and egregiously *foolish*. For Example, our Blessed Saviour expressly tells us, that *the Children of this World are in their Generation wiser than the Children of Light*. And as an Instance of this, he says of *the unjust Steward* (who had defrauded his Lord, in order to secure a Subsistence for himself) that *he had done wisely*, LUKE xvi. 8. By all which no more is meant, but that wicked Men do frequently act with much Craft or Cunning, for the compassing of those *particular Designs*, which in this World they propose to themselves: But if we consider the same Men, with respect to that *general End* which

a rational Creature ought always to have in his View, which is not only his present, but also and chiefly his future Happiness; nothing can appear more stupid, and even sottish, than the Sinner, who, for a little present, empty, and even imaginary, as well as momentary Satisfaction, gives up and forfeits the Favour of God, the Comfort of a good Conscience, and even the eternal Happiness of Heaven; and exposes himself to the contrary Misery both here and for ever hereafter.

I have thus endeavoured as briefly, and yet as plainly as I could, to set forth the Nature and true Notion of *Folly*, in the general: And from these Premisses I conceive it will not be difficult to draw such Conclusions as may make up a reasonable Answer to our first Enquiry; namely, What Sort of Questions are to be look'd upon as *foolish*.

First then, *all Questions that are altogether useless and unprofitable, are justly to be reputed foolish*. For if the Matter of a Question is of no manner of Use nor Profit, neither the Question itself, nor its Discussion or Determination, can possibly be *serviceable to any good End or Purpose*, and consequently the whole must as necessarily come under the Imputation of *Folly*, as ploughing the Sand, or winnow-

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ing of Chaff, or any other Instance of that Sort that can be given.

And if, by the Test of this Rule, we should proceed to make a Trial of all that prodigious Multitude of Questions, which for many Years, or rather Ages, have employed the Wits, and taken up very much of the Time of abundance of learned, or at least subtile Men: How few of them are there, which, upon an impartial Examination, would be able to escape the severest Censure of this Sort?

Let a thorough Search be made into the very great Number of Volumes, which have been published not only in Philosophy, but Divinity also; and a List of all the Questions there laboriously handled (if the Thing were possible) particularly drawn out of them all; and then let any wise Man speak plainly, and shew, if he can, what real Benefit, Profit, or Advantage do, or can the greatest Part of them any way bring to Mankind. There is no doubt indeed but that many Questions, truly useful in all Faculties, have been rightly proposed, judiciously stated, learnedly discussed, and well and profitably determined, in almost all Ages, of which any certain Monuments have been transmitted to us; but at the same Time it is evident that Learning, has been all along
not

not improved, but molested, retarded, and even distorted by a vast Number of trifling Disputations, which, when well considered, are no way sound, on the one Side or the other, in the least to contribute either to make Men wiser or better, or happier, or more acceptable to God, or more useful or serviceable one to another, than if such Things or Matters had never been once thought of. To say nothing of the Strife and Contention which they have begotten amongst Men of Learning, or at least the Pretenders to it, and the Sects and Parties into which they have often divided both the Philosophers and the Divines, whose bare Authority has drawn their ignorant Followers into no small Part of the Contention. In the Midst of all which, however sparing we may or ought to be of the *Persons* of Men, yet as to very many of the *Questions* wherein they have employed and busied both themselves and others, I think we may with all Assurance pronounce them to be *foolish*; because, being *altogether useless and unprofitable*, it was, and is impossible that they could, or can be *serviceable to any Manner of good End or Purpose*, although we should suppose that no other Mischief or Inconvenience, beside the bare Loss of Time, had followed from them.

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But some perhaps will say, that however insignificant these Sort of Questions, directly and in themselves, may be; yet still there is a very good Use that may be made of them, for the whetting of the Wit, and exercising of the Understanding of those that are young, in order to prepare them for the Reception of more useful and necessary Knowledge. Teach a Man to shoot well at a Mark, or a Man of Straw, and he will be the better able to level at the Enemy when he comes into the Field: And if you instruct Youth well in the Art of Disputation, although it be but upon trivial Subjects, yet this itself will qualify them in proper Time to maintain and defend more important Truths against all that oppose them. And therefore, for this Reason alone, if there were no other, it will be said that such Questions are not universally to be condemned, as altogether useless and *foolish*.

I answer, that where the State of a Question is clear and distinct, the Terms well understood, and the Notions by them conveyed unto us plain and intelligible; although the Matter of it in itself be of little or no Importance; yet still the Discussion of it may be of good Use toward forming the Understanding of those who
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are young, and thereby enabling them, in due Time, to judge the more exactly of Things of greater Moment ; and consequently the Question itself ought not to be censured as absolutely *foolish*. But unnecessarily to multiply even such Questions as these, or to spend too much Time about them, and thereby turn that into a great Part of the *Business* of Life, which ought only to have been a short *Preparation* for it; and beyond this, to introduce a multitude of Questions, that are not only trifling, but also dark and intricate, and the very State and Meaning of them hardly if at all distinctly intelligible; and yet farther, to intermix these obscure and perplex'd Notions with the Things that belong to Religion and Conscience, and by them, rather than by God's own Word, to pronounce and determine even in Matters of Faith and Duty (which yet has frequently and notoriously been done among Christians) cannot in my Opinion escape the Imputation of *Folly*: As being not only useless and altogether unprofitable, but very pernicious both to the Soundness of Learning and Purity of Religion; by taking Men off from more useful Studies; by giving their Understandings a very wrong Turn; and (which is worst of all) by raising a Mist, and thereby rendring the Doctrines

Doctrines of Faith, and the Rules of Practice, which God has plainly delivered in his Word (as far as they are to be believed and followed) in many Cases both obscure and intricate, as I shall presently have Occasion farther to mention. And this brings me from the general Consideration of *foolish Questions*, to a more particular one, with special reference to Matters of *Religion*.

For a second Rule therefore on this Occasion, I lay it down, that *where it is beyond the Power of Man to determine a Question, such a Question ought at all times to be look'd upon as foolish, but particularly so when it is brought in as Matter of Religion.*

Where the very Terms of a Question are unintelligible, or there is no sufficient Evidence either from Reason or Authority (whether divine or human) to proceed upon: It is as impossible for us to determine such a Question as this, as it would be for Men born blind to judge of Light and Colours, or those who are in one Kingdom to tell what is doing in another at a Thousand Miles distance. And where it is impossible to come to any rational or probable Determination, there surely to begin or to keep up a Disputation can never be the Part of a wise Man; and least of all so, when Religion, upon which
our

our eternal Happiness depends, is drawn in and made a Party in the Contention.

This is so plain as to need no farther Proof; and from it we may draw this very useful Inference; that *where we have no manner of Knowledge or Information concerning a Doctrine, but what we have received from God, by his revealed Word contained in the Holy Scriptures; all other Questions concerning the Explication or Truth of such a Doctrine, must be reputed as foolish* (because impossible by us, both for want of Capacity, and Evidence, to be determined) *except this one; namely, what is the true Sense and Meaning of those Passages of Holy Scripture, wherein this same Doctrine either is, or is supposed to be delivered or touched upon?* Or in other Terms, "What " is it which God proposes explicitly to " be believed in this, or these Passages of " Holy Scripture?" The true Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures ought, no doubt, by all proper Means to be sought for; or else to what Purpose (can we imagine) has God given them to us? But it being certain, and accordingly allowed, that in Matters of *mere Revelation*, we have no way of making the least Discovery; beyond what God by those sacred Writings has been pleased to communicate to us: What can be more absurd than for
Men

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Men to pretend to go farther in their Search, than either they have any Guide to direct them, or Light by which to see their Way.

For Example, the Being of God, his Eternity, Wisdom, Power, Justice, Goodness, and Providence: The Obligation that lies upon all rational Creatures to conform themselves to his Will or Law: The great Rules of Duty towards God, ourselves, and all other Men, to which we are bound to give Obedience: The Distribution of Rewards and Punishments in another Life, and that, in order thereto, the Soul shall survive the Body; all this, I say, may with very great Strength of Argument be gathered and concluded, antecedently to all Revelation, from those Principles of common Reason, in which all thinking Men do generally and readily agree. And therefore, since God has been pleased to make these Things in a great Measure the Objects of that *Reason*, which he has implanted on the very Nature of Man, we may and indeed we ought to make use of our Reason in explaining, proving, and farther enquiring into them; it being the Business of every Faculty to be conversant with, and employ itself upon its own Objects. And although he has also been pleased to give

us a farther Assurance of all these same Things by Revelation, in his Holy Word (for which Cause we believe them also upon his Authority) yet their thus becoming Objects of *Faith*, does not alter the Nature of the Things themselves, or consequently make them cease to be Objects of *Reason*: Nor is it any Absurdity to say that *Reason* and *Faith* may at the same time be exercised about them; *Reason*, as far as they may be concluded from the Principles of *Reason*; and *Faith*, as they come also testified unto us by the Authority of God himself. Thus, although by natural Reason alone it may be proved that God made the World, and the invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen (i. e. made known) being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead (Rom. i. 20.) yet through *Faith* also we understand that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God; so that Things which are seen, were not made of Things which do appear, HEB. xi. 3.

But there are other Doctrines contained in Holy Scripture, of which our *Reason* neither could, nor ever can make the least Discovery, but what is made unto us by supernatural Revelation from God. As that these three, the Father, the Word, and

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and the Holy Ghost are one, 1 JOH. v. 7. That in the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, JOH. i. 1. That the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us. That his Glory was as of the only Begotten of the Father, & 14. That in him dwelleth all the Fullness of the Godhead bodily, COL. ii. 9. That upon Christ's withdrawing his bodily Presence from his Disciples, another Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, was by the Father to be sent in Christ's Name, to abide with them for ever, to dwell with them, and be in them, to teach them all things, JOH. xiv. 16, 17, 26. and to guide them into all Truth, Chap. xvi. 13. That Christ Jesus gave himself a Ransom to all, 1 TIM. ii. 5, 6. That he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and for the Sins of the whole World, 1 JOH. ii. 2. In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, EPH. i. 7. And that the Cup of Blessing which we bless, is the Communion of the Blood of Christ, and the Bread which we break, the Communion of the Body of Christ, 1 COR. x. 16. All this, I say, with more to the like Purpose, that frequently occurs in Holy Scripture, is what the Reason of Man would never so much as once have thought of, if God had not been pleased to make it known unto us;

nor is it possible for us in all, or any of these Things, to make the least farther Discovery, beyond what is so made known; as most evidently appears from the fruitless Attempts of so many learned Men, who instead of making these Matters clearer than God has already thought fit himself to make them, have by their curious and voluminous Disputations about them, only involved them in greater Obscurity: And it is of these, and such Points as these, which are made known unto us by *Revelation* only, that I am to be understood when I say that the only Enquiry, which we are to make concerning the Explication or Truth of them, or any of them, is *what is the true Sense and Meaning of those Passages of Holy Scripture, wherein they either are, or are supposed to be delivered or touched upon.* For, although it is the Duty of every Man, according to his Ability, to *search the Scriptures*, JOH. v. 39. and to make the best Enquiry he can into the true Meaning of those Things which the Spirit of God has there delivered, that he may fully *understand what the Will of the Lord is*, EPH. v. 17. yet, as long as we are in this Life, we must be content to *know in part, and prophesy in part*, 1 COR. xiii. 9. and to *see through a Glass darkly*, & 12.

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And if we will not confine ourselves within the Limits which God has thought fit to set us, and be satisfied with *those Things which are revealed*, and therefore *belong unto us and to our Children*; but will be prying farther into *the secret Things*, which *belong unto the Lord our God*, DEUT. xxix. 29. and attempt to make Enquiries beyond what *Reason* is able to discover, or we have any *Revelation* to direct us; as all our Labour herein must needs be in vain, and therefore *foolish*; so will it also be a great Aggravation of our *Folly*, that such Sort of Enquiries are not only very presumptuous, but also of mischievous Consequence to Religion; as I shall have farther occasion by and by to observe.

Thirdly, *Where the Determination of a Question contributes nothing towards the Salvation of any Man, such a Question*, however wise it may be thought in other respects, yet *with respect to Religion*, is *no better than foolish*.

St. Paul tells us, that *the Gospel of Christ is the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth*, ROM. i. 16. The Salvation of Man was the End and Design of Christ's coming into the World. *The Son of Man* (says he) *is come to seek and to save that which was lost*, LUK. xix. 10. *God so loved the World that he gave his only*

ly begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life, JOH. iii. 16. And the only Motive which he has proposed for our embracing his Religion is, that *he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned,* MARK xvi. 16. And the same also is the Design of every one who accordingly embraces it. *Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal Life?* says the young Man to Christ, MAT. xix. 16. His Answer is, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments,* & 17. And *what must I do to be saved?* says the Keeper of the Prison to Paul and Silas, ACTS xvi. 30. And *they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House,* & 31. From all which, and more that might be added, as well as the Reason of the Thing, we may most certainly conclude, that *the everlasting Salvation of Man is the only End and Design of Religion.* Other Ends and Designs, no doubt, are to be served by it; but then they are either the same in effect with this, as *the glorifying of God* (which differs only in Notion, and not in Reality from our Salvation) or wholly subservient to it; as *Peace, Prosperity, and a good Conscience in this World,* which are always to be directed

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Since then the End and Design of Religion which God has appointed, and every Man ought to propose to himself in it, is eternal Salvation, and whatsoever does not answer the *End* of a Thing, must in respect to that thing be accounted *foolish*; it follows, that as in the Instance already given, we might justly censure a Man of *Folly*, who should take Care to provide Bricks and Mortar for the building of a *Ship*; so certainly can it never be look'd upon as a Piece of Wisdom, in Discourses of Religion, to bring in Questions in which the *Salvation of Man* is no way concerned.

All who profess Christianity with any degree of Sobriety, do thus far in the general agree, that in order to everlasting Salvation, God requires from every Man, according to the best of his Capacity, that he honestly and sincerely believe, and profess to believe all those Truths which by the Gospel are made necessary on our Part to be received and embraced; that he be duly received into the Church by Baptism in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that he repent of his Sins, and lead his Life conformably unto God's Commands; that he frequently

quently partake of the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; and that he give all due Obedience to all his lawful Governors, both Civil and Ecclesiastical. And therefore as far as the handling of any Question may tend to give us a just Notion of these Things, and confirm us in the Belief and Practice of them, or any of them, so far such Questions are to be esteemed as wise and useful with respect to Religion, because they promote the great *End* of it, that is to say, the Salvation of Man. But besides these, there are a Multitude of other Questions that have been brought into Books of Divinity, and sometimes also into the Pulpit, which at best serve only to gratify a curious Itch of Disputation, and are no way serviceable towards the confirming of our Faith, or directing of our Practice in order to our eternal Happiness; and therefore, with respect to Religion, most justly stand chargeable with *Folly*; whatever Wit or Learning may otherwise appear to be in them.

Fourthly and Lastly, Where a Truth, sufficiently manifest in itself (as far as it is necessary to be known) is, by the Manner of proposing or discussing a Question, made obscure or doubtful; such a Question, or at least the Manner of proposing or discussing it,

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it, must, *with respect to Religion, be always accounted foolish.* This Rule I find suggested by *Thomas Aquinas*^a: I wish he and others had been careful to observe it.

All those Truths, the Knowledge of which God has thought fit to make any way necessary to our eternal Happiness, as far as they are so necessary, are so clear in themselves, or so plainly proposed to us in Holy Scripture, that it is hard for a sincere and impartial Enquirer, if he proceeds in a direct Way, to miss them, or any of them. But learned Men have too commonly reckoned it as a great part of their Glory, to dispute probably on each Side of a Question, and sometimes to raise very strong Objections, even against the true Opinion, that they might have the greater Credit by solving them: In order whereunto they have brought into Divinity, as well as Philosophy, a great Number of hard Words, Terms of Art, and subtle Distinctions. By the dextrous Use and Application of which, it is often easy for an ingenious Man to give an Air of Obscurity to that which is plain, of Truth to that which is false, and of Falseness to that which is true. And hence it

^a *Quando manifestum proponitur ut dubium.* Com. in Tit. iii. 9.

— has come to pass, that although all that God can be supposed to require from any Man, in order to his Salvation, is most evidently comprehended under these two Heads, that is to say, to believe such Truths as he has made known, *as far as he has thought fit to make them known*, and to obey such Laws as he has given; and consequently all Questions in Matters of Religion must of necessity, in like Manner, be reducible to these two; namely, *First*, What has God made known? and how far has he made it known? And *Secondly*, What has God commanded or forbidden? And how far does the Obligation of this or that Divine Law extend? Both which Things seem not very difficult to a sober Man, well studied in the Holy Scriptures, upon most Occasions to resolve: Notwithstanding this, I say, such a Liberty has been taken by learned Men not only to multiply, but also to perplex Questions, and that in the practical as well as speculative Part of Divinity; that abundance of their Books are become meer Labyrinths, and instead of being a *Help*, are no small *Hindrance* in our Way to heavenly Knowledge.

Had they taken this Liberty only in the bare Speculations of human Philosophy, or extended it no farther than to Matters of

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a mere temporal or worldly Concern, it had been much less culpable; although upon any occasion to perplex the Understandings of Men, and render them confused, can never be truly commendable: But thus to raise a Mist in Matters of *Faith* and *Duty*, and thereby to make the Way to Heaven more dark and difficult to be found than otherwise by much it would be, is not only useless towards the Design of Religion (which is to bring Men to eternal Salvation) but also so directly destructive of it, that it may well be charged with *Impiety* as well as *Folly*.

And thus I have endeavoured, with as much Brevity and Plainness as I could, to lay down certain Rules, whereby we may upon all Occasions know what *Questions* are to be reckoned as *foolish*, and more especially so with relation to Matters of *Religion*. It would be very easy to give abundance of particular Instances of such Sort of Questions (as by a Multitude of Writers they have been brought in) under almost all the Heads both of doctrinal and practical Divinity. As the Attributes and internal Actions of God, the Nature of the Union, and Distinction of Persons in the blessed Trinity, the hypostatick Union of the two Natures in Christ,

Predestination, Original Sin, Grace, the Nature and Number of the Sacraments, with the Manner of their conferring Grace, Satisfaction for Sin, Merit of good Works, the Manner of Christ's Prefence in the Holy Eucharist, Faith, Hope, Charity, Oaths, Vows, and almost every other Thing wherein Religion is any way concerned: In all which they have not been content to enquire *what is that Truth which God has made known, and we are bound to believe; and what are those Laws to which he requires our Obedience* (which, as I have already said, is all that is or can be necessary) but they have indulged their Curiosity (many of them) to the very utmost in putting many Questions that are altogether useless and trifling; many that are impossible for the Wit of Man to determine, or sometimes even to understand many which no way in the least conduce to Man's Salvation; and *Lastly*, Many of them proposed, stated, and handled after such a Manner, as to leave the Mind in greater Perplexity and Confusion after the reading of them than it was before. But the Time will not allow me here to enlarge; and therefore I must leave this to your own Observation, and proceed to say something on the

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Second general Head proposed, which was, *How far such foolish Questions are to be avoided.*

In the *first* Place then, if we may suppose that none of these Questions were already moved, as far as this Supposition holds, it is and would be the Duty of every Man to the best of his Power, to suppress and keep them in perpetual Silence, without ever making the least mention of them. The Reason hereof is plain from what has been just now said: For why should our Thoughts be diverted or taken off from what is really good and useful, by such Speculations as are wholly useless and unprofitable, or it may be never well to be understood, and therefore not likely to bring us to any fix'd or settled Determination of Judgment? Or why should we offer to intermix such Things with Religion as no way serve the true End and Design of it, which is Man's Salvation, and very often tend only to perplex it with Doubts and Difficulties? Nor ought it to be passed over without a Remark, that *St. Paul* has been particularly zealous in his Admonitions touching these Sort of Questions, in order to have prevented, if he could, the great Mischief which he foresaw they were likely to do to the Christian Church and Religion.

Thus, *14.* before my Text, *charging them* (says he) *before the Lord, that they strive not about Words to no Profit, but to the subverting of the Hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. But shun prophane and vain Babblings; for they will increase unto more Ungodliness. And their Words will eat as doth a Canker.*

1 TIM. i. 4. he gives a Caution against such Things as *minister Questions rather than godly edifying; and Chap. vi. 4.* he severely censures those who *dote about Questions and Strifes of Words, whereof cometh Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmisings, perverse Disputings.*

Again, *COL. ii. 8.* Beware (says he) *lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy and vain Deceit. And TIT. iii. 8.* This is a faithful Saying, and these Things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works. These Things are good and profitable unto Men. But avoid foolish Questions.

Where, from the Opposition that he makes, — we may plainly gather that all such Questions as no Way conduce to our Belief in God, and the Doctrine which he has delivered, or to the Practice of good Works, are,

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are, with respect to the Business of Religion, to be accounted as *foolish*.

The very same *Opposition* he also makes in the Place from whence I have taken my Text: *Flee also youthful Lusts, but follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart.* Then it follows, by way of *Opposition*, *but foolish and unlearned Questions avoid:* To which let me add the solemn Charge, wherewith he concludes his first Epistle to *Timothy*: *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy Trust, avoiding profane and vain Babblings, and Oppositions of Science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the Faith.*

After all which, what an astonishing Thing is it, that in direct *Opposition* to *St. Paul's* Authority, as well as to the clear Reason of the Thing, such a vast Number of these useless, unprofitable, and even *foolish* Notions and Questions should be brought in and intermixed with the Christian Religion, nay, and oftentimes so great a Stress laid upon them, even by those who acknowledge the divine Inspiration of all this great Apostle's Writings? As will soon be manifest to all who take but a little Pains to acquaint themselves with the Books that have been written, more especially since the Introduction of

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what we call *School Divinity* into the Church.

Or if neither the Authority of *St. Paul* nor the *Folly* of the Thing could put a Stop to them; yet methinks the evil and pernicious Consequences that always attend these *foolish Questions*, should have prevailed with all Christians to *avoid them*. For they are not only *unprofitable and vain*, *TIT.* iii. 9. and a Hindrance to Men in their Way to Heaven; but they *corrupt their Minds from the Simplicity that is in Christ*, *2 COR.* xi. 3. they *gender Strifes*, *2 TIM.* ii. 23. to the Destruction of Peace and Charity; they divide first the Schools, and then the Church itself into Sects and Parties, and thereby give the common Enemy an Opportunity of triumphing over the whole. By this Means the once flourishing *Eastern Church*^b was brought to Desolation; and how far the like may give the Papacy an Advantage against the Reformation, or expose Christianity, and even all Religion, to Infidels or Atheists, is what God only can foresee, but we should endeavour carefully to prevent.

Thus far then we may certainly conclude, that where *foolish Questions* are not

^b *Prideaux's* Preface to the Life of *Mahomet*.

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already started, it is the Duty of every Man, as much as he can, to suppress them, and for ever to keep them from being moved.

But the Case is otherwise now ; *foolish Questions* have long since got Possession of the Minds of Men ; many have set a great Value upon them, as if the best Part of Learning consisted in them ; and some of them are become the Foundation of divers Errors in Religion. If therefore, in these Circumstances, we should *wholly avoid*, and upon no Account so much as meddle with them ; it would give a great Advantage to cunning and designing Men, who by the Help of such Questions as these, and their perplex'd Way of handling them, endeavour to make the People believe that in Matters of Religion they are wholly unable to judge for themselves, and therefore, as they value their Salvation, must entirely give themselves up to the Conduct of their Guides. Wherefore,

Secondly, When *foolish Questions* cannot entirely and altogether be *avoided*, yet still it is our Duty to avoid the *Folly*, and as much as we can to prevent the ill Consequences of them.

The Folly and ill Consequences of this Sort of Questions most evidently consist
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in these three Things: *First*, That oftentimes Men perplex their Minds and wrangle with others about such Things as either are unintelligible to us, or for want of sufficient Evidence or Authority, cannot be determined by us. *Secondly*, That oftentimes Men embrace Error for Truth. Or, *Thirdly*, That sometimes they determine that to be necessary to Salvation which really is not so. Wherever therefore we are under a Necessity of handling any Question, which in itself is but *foolish*, but yet not thought so by others; we must,

In the *first* Place, consider well whether it is possible for us, upon any good Grounds, ever to come to a Determination of it: And if it be not, then all we have to do is to shew that the Question is no more but a bare Noise of Words, without a certain and determinate Signification; or else that there is no Proof to be had, either from the Reason of Things or any sufficient Authority, whether human or divine, upon which we may come to a determinate Conclusion of the Matter; and beyond this to dispute about Things that are unintelligible, or for any other Reason undeterminable, every one must own to be but Labour lost, and consequently great *Folly*.

Secondly,

Secondly, If the Question be intelligible, and possible to be determined; then we must proceed to fix the Meaning of the Terms, and consider the Strength of such Proofs as are to be produced both on the one Side and the other. For if we do not take the true Sense of a Question, it is *to us* the same Thing as if it were absolutely unintelligible. And though we rightly understand the State of it, yet it is impossible for us to determine it (and therefore in vain to attempt it) until we have well considered the Arguments that are brought on both Sides.

Thirdly and Lastly, When upon good Grounds we have determined a Question, and found on which Side of it the Truth lies; yet still it may be another Question, how far the believing or putting in Practice such a *Truth* is *necessary in order to eternal Salvation*? Here then we are again to consider and weigh the Arguments that are brought on both Sides, that is to say for and against its being *necessary to Salvation*; without which it would be as great Folly to pronounce Sentence upon the *Necessity*, as before upon the *Truth* of any thing whatsoever.

And thus I have done with the second Thing proposed, which was to shew *How far foolish Questions are to be avoided*. The
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Application of all that has been said to that Multitude of Questions to which the same may justly be extended, would be a Work rather for a Volume than the latter Part of a Sermon. And therefore I leave it to your own Christian Prudence and Discretion; beseeching God to grant that we may all be so *filled with the Knowledge of his Will in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding*, COL. i. 9. as may most tend to his Glory, and the Salvation both of ourselves, and those who are committed to our Charge, through *Jesus Christ*, &c.

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On Contending for the

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Beloved, when I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you earnestly to contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.

BEFORE I come to handle those Points which from these Words I chiefly design to insist upon; it will be very proper to take Notice of some other very profitable Things which are therein suggested to us. I shall only mention them (the Time not allowing me to do more)

more) and leave the fuller Consideration of them to your own private Meditation.

First then, we may observe the tender Affection with which the Apostle addresses himself to the People to whom he writes. He calls them his *Beloved*; and this Love he shews in that affectionate Prayer which just before he had put up for them: *Mercy unto you, and Peace and Love be multiplied, &c.* 2. The same Word [*Beloved*] we often find to be made use of by others of the Apostles in the same Manner.

Christian Charity ought sincerely to be shewn, *as we have Opportunity, to all Men, especially unto them that are of the Household of Faith*, GAL. vi. 10. But there ought to be a very peculiar Love in a Pastor for his People; *for whose Souls* it is his Business to *watch*, HEB. xiii. 17. And if any of our People do not make us a suitable Return; yet still it is our Duty to *overcome Evil with Good*, ROM. xii. 21. and *in Meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves*, 2 TIM. ii. 25. This from the Word *Beloved*.

Secondly, We have here pointed out to us the Mark which every Preacher and Teacher of the Gospel ought always to have in his View. What was it that St. Jude gave all Diligence to write of? He himself tells
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us here, it was *of the common Salvation*: That is to say, to give such Instructions to all who would receive them, as might direct them in the Way to that everlasting Happiness which God has provided, and Christ has purchased for all who faithfully serve him. And that the very same Thing was the only Aim of all the rest of the Apostles and first Preachers of Christianity, is from the whole New Testament evident beyond Exception.

In framing all our Sermons or Discourses for our People, we ought to put this Question home to ourselves: "Will these Things contribute to the eternal Salvation of those that hear us?" If not, for what End do we propose them? *Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy Doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee,* says St. Paul to Timothy, 1 TIM. iv. 16. This from the Words *common Salvation*.

Thirdly, We may here remark in what Manner *the common Salvation of Mankind* ought to be promoted; that is to say, with Diligence. *I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation*; says my Text. Our Blessed Saviour calls the Preachers of the Gospel *Labourers in God's Harvest*, MAT. ix. 38. and a faithful *Labourer* ought always to be diligent. *Preach the*
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Word, be instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-sufferings and Doctrine, says St. Paul to Timothy, and in him to all Ministers of the Gospel, 2 TIM. iv. 2. And what the Prophet *Jeremiah* says upon another Occasion, may as well be applied to a careless Preacher. *Cursed is he that doeth the Work of the Lord deceitfully; or negligently*, as the Word is rendred in the Margin, JER. xlviii. 10. This from the Word *Diligence*.

Fourthly, We may here take Notice of the Appellation which the Apostle gives to the Christians of these Times. *The Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*. By the *Saints* are meant the Christians who first received and made Profession of the Gospel; who in those Days almost universally led such strict, pure, and holy Lives, as to have the Name of *Saints*, *sanctified*, or some such Denomination usually given to them in the New Testament. O then! In this let us follow their Example: We have the same God, the same Saviour, the same Religion, the same Hope of Salvation that they had. Let us then lead holy Lives as they did, since we have the same Encouragement so to do. As our Blessed Saviour told the
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Men of that Generation, that the *Men of Nineveh would rise up in Judgment with them and condemn them*, (MAT. xii. 41.) so may we expect that the primitive Christians *will rise up in Judgment with us and condemn us*, if we degenerate from that excellent Pattern which they set before us: For *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, HEB. xii. 14. The primitive Christians were *Saints* upon Earth, and we must be so too, if we expect to be *Saints* in Heaven, when this short Life is at an End. This from the Word *Saints*.

Having thus touched upon these four Observations, as proper Subjects for our private Meditation: From these Words I shall propose two Things to be more fully considered.

First, What is it which the Apostle here exhorts us earnestly to contend for.

Secondly, What Sort of Contention it is which we are therein to make use of. Or, in other Terms, how it is that we are to contend.

Touching the first of these, the Text tells us we are to *contend*, and that *earnestly, for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*. By the *Saints* I have already told you, we are to understand the first Christians; and from the Text itself we may plainly gather that by *the Faith* is

here meant whatsoever tends to our *common Salvation*: That is to say, the true Christian Religion, whereby we all hope to be saved. For this true *Faith* and Religion it is that we are *earnestly to contend*; *in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel*, says St. Paul, PHIL. i. 27. I need not stand to set forth the different Significations of the Word *Faith*, which are well known. Plain it is, that in my Text, as in some other Places of Scripture, it is put to denote the saving Doctrine of the Gospel, or the *Christian Faith*, as we usually call it.

But there is a remarkable Expression in the Text, of which good Notice ought to be taken. It is not every Doctrine, which some Men have adopted into their Faith or Religion, that we are to *contend for*; but that Doctrine or *Faith alone, which was once delivered unto the Saints*, that is to say, to the first Christians.

For the right understanding whereof, we must remember that the Apostles were to teach nothing unto Men in order to their Salvation, but only what *Christ had commanded them, teaching them* (says Christ) *to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you*, MAT. xxviii. 20.

To enable them to do this, Christ gave them his Promise that *the Holy Ghost should teach*

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teach them all Things (that is, all that were necessary) *and bring all Things to their Remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them,* JOH. xiv. 26.

The Apostles were *faithful Stewards* of the Trust committed to them, 1 COR. iv. 2. Wherever they preached the Gospel, they *kept back nothing that was profitable,* ACTS xx. 20. but *declared all the Council of God,* & 27. that is, all that God had made necessary for Man's Salvation. And when once the Apostles had thus preached the Gospel, *if they themselves or an Angel from Heaven should have taught any other Thing as Gospel, than that which they had preached, let him be accursed,* says St. Paul, GAL. i. 8.

From hence it manifestly follows, that before we can lawfully *contend* for any particular Doctrine, as being a Doctrine of *Faith*, we must be very sure of two Things:

First, That that same Doctrine was taught by the Apostles to the first Christians; for otherwise it can be no Part of the *Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*. Whatsoever is at this Time necessary to Salvation, was alike necessary in the Days of the Apostles: Nor have any Men, or even the Angels in Heaven, any
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Power to add to the Gospel of Christ, as St. *Paul* expressly teaches.

Secondly, We must also be sure that the Apostles taught that same Doctrine, as a Doctrine of *Faith*, and necessary to Salvation; or else we have no Warrant to *contend for it*. My Text directs us only to *contend for the Faith*, and *common Salvation*.

In the Holy Scriptures, which the Apostles left with the Christian Church, and in which we all own their Doctrine to be contained; in the Holy Scriptures, I say, there are many Truths useful to be known by those who have the Opportunity of learning them; but yet not necessary to Salvation. There are also *some Things hard to be understood*, as St. *Peter* takes Notice, 2 PET. iii. 16. Now if a Man be ignorant of, or even mistaken in some such Things as these, provided that his Mistakes do not arise from some Perverseness or Fault of his own; can we imagine that our good and gracious God will lay such Ignorance or Error which a Man cannot help, to his Charge as a Crime? Let a Man read the Holy Scriptures with any Degree of Attention, and nothing is more easy than to distinguish between those Passages wherein our Duty and Salvation are concerned, and those which contain

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contain Things of an inferior or other Nature. We ought indeed, in a due Manner to *contend* for those of the former Sort; as being necessary to be rightly known and believed. But there is no Occasion for our being zealous for our Opinions in the latter Sort, where Error or Ignorance can have no ill Consequence, provided that Men would be humble and peaceable.

From what has been said it manifestly appears how exceeding faulty the Church of *Rome* is, in contending, after the Manner she does, for such Doctrines as, if they were true (as most evidently they are not) cannot yet be look'd upon as any Part of *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, as having never been taught by the Apostles.

We have no Account (that can be depended on) of what the Apostles taught, but the Holy Scriptures. Let *them* then be searched with the greatest Diligence; and let any impartial Man shew, if he can, — that the Apostles taught the *Romish* Doctrines of Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the giving divine Worship to the Host, the Communion under one kind alone, the Invocation of Saints, the Worshipping of Images and Relicks, Purgatory, the *Pope's* Supremacy, and all
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the rest of the Additions which that Church would impose upon us as Articles of the Christian Faith. That all these *Romish* Doctrines are false, and some of them most absurd and monstrous, has often been proved to every Man that will not forfeit both his Reason and his Senses. But even without entering into any Debate about the *Truth* of them, it is enough for us to say they were never taught by the Apostles, and therefore can be no Part of *the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*: For which Reason they ought to be rejected as unwarrantable Additions to the Gospel. And yet the Church of *Rome* denies Salvation to all those who refuse to profess the Belief of these Doctrines, though in all other Respects they who refuse these Additions, appear to be good Christians.

But do not the *Romanists* pretend to bring Arguments from Scripture for these their Tenets? I answer, some lame Arguments (and very lame ones indeed) they pretend to draw, or rather *drag* from Scripture, to prove the *Truth* of these their Doctrines. But I never yet could meet with any of them who even attempted, by any thing like an Argument, to prove the Necessity of believing them in order to Salvation. And if the Belief of them

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them cannot be shewn to be necessary to Salvation ; how can they be look'd upon as any Part of *the Faith*? Or why should they be *contended for*?

I shall close this Part of my Discourse with those most divine Words of St. Paul, which I wish were deeply imprinted upon the Heart of every Christian, 2 TIM. ii. 22. *Flee youthful Lusts, but follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart. But foolish and unlearned Questions avoid, knowing that they do gender Strifes. Every Question, which has no Tendency to our Salvation, is, with regard to Christianity, a foolish and unlearned Question.*

Thus we may see what it is which the Apostle in my Text *exhorts us earnestly to contend for*: It is *the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*. That is to say, those Things which the Apostles taught, as necessary to *the common Salvation*. I come,

In the *second Place*, to shew what Sort of *Contention* it is which we are therein to make use of; or, in other Terms, how it is that we are to *contend for this Faith*.

Earnestly to contend for the Faith, is to strive and do all that is in our Power that true Religion may be propagated and

spread abroad in the World. But too many Men have had Recourse to unlawful Ways of propagating their Religion, which we must carefully avoid. Even true Religion must not be promoted by wicked Means. We must not *do Evil that Good may come*, says St. Paul, Rom. iii. 8. *And if a Man also strive for Masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully*, 2 TIM. ii. 5.

Too many Men there have been and are, who have taken up a Way of *contending for their Faith*, and propagating their Religion, however corrupt, by raising bitter Persecution, to the utmost of their Power, against all such as refuse to make Profession of it. For which Purpose War (not defensive, which may be lawful, but offensive:) War, I say, Croisades, Massacres, Racks, Gibbets, Fire and Faggot, Dragoons, and the Inquisition have been made use of. *Horresco referens*. Who can think of all this without Horror?

— Persecution may make a Man an Hypocrite, and so bring him to Damnation; but can never influence him to be a sincere Professor of any Religion whatsoever; because it does not convince his Understanding of any thing but the Cruelty of the Persecutors.

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Persecution is directly contrary to the gentle Spirit of the Gospel, which teaches us to Love even *our Enemies* (MATT. v. 44.) and *in Meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves* (2 TIM. ii. 2.) He who calls himself a Christian, and yet would persecute others for their Religion, *knows not what Manner of Spirit he is of*, LUK. ix. 5. Persecution then is not a lawful Way of *contending for the Faith*, as might much farther be proved if there were occasion.

Some Men seem to think that they *contend for the Faith*, when they earnestly dispute about such Questions as the Wit of Man alone has mixed with Religion; of which Thousands of Instances might be given. But *the Doctrine which is according to Godliness* (as St. Paul calls it, 1 TIM. vi. 3.) that Doctrine which alone instructs us in the Way of Salvation, is easy to be understood as far as it is necessary to be believed. Religion is not to be made a Trial of our Wit and Subtilty, but of our Honesty and Sincerity; and therefore we have often Warning given us against *Philosophy and vain Deceit*, COL. ii. 8. Against such Things as *minister Questions rather than godly edifying, which is in Faith*, 1 TIM. i. 4. Against *perverse Disputings*,

1 TIM. vi. 5. and *Science falsely so called*,
 & 20. Against *teaching for Doctrines*
the Commandments (or *Opinions*) of Men,
 MAT. xv. 9. And against *foolish and un-*
learned Questions, which we are directed to
 avoid, 2 TIM. ii. 23. If learned Men
 had always set themselves to distinguish
 between those Things which God has made
 necessary to be known in order to Salvati-
 on, and those Things which are not alike
 necessary; how many fierce Disputati-
 ons, how many Sects and Parties would this
 have prevented? Some Men have thought
 they were *contending for the Faith*, when
 they were inventing and spreading many
 Stories concerning their Saints, or pre-
 tended Saints, and their Miracles, without
 any good Authority to support such Fa-
 bles; of which we have abundance of In-
 stances in the *Legends* and *Lives of Saints*
 (as they are called) so much esteemed in the
 Church of *Rome*. There is great Reason
 to think that they who spread and up-
 hold such fabulous Stories, have an Eye
 to their own Gain; it being well known
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tion of their Religion, and thereby into the Practice of it; yet surely it is unlawful to tell Lies for Religion; nor *does the God of Truth* (DEUT. xxxii. 4.) allow us to *talk deceitfully for him*, JOB xiii. 7. And however these legendary Stories may impose upon ignorant People, to make them not truly religious, but superstitious; yet it is certain that the more knowing Men, even of their own Church, do look upon them as ridiculous; and that some of them despise even Religion itself, for their Sakes.

Lastly, Some there are who think they are *contending for the Faith*, when they give bitter and opprobrious Language to those who differ in Religion, or sometimes it may be only in Opinion, from them: Of which I wish there were not too many Instances in the controversial Writings of some of all Parties. All Controversies, especially about Matters of Religion, ought to be managed with great Temper and Calmness. He who mixes Passion with his Arguments, thereby disturbs the Mind of his Adversary, and renders him the more unfit to be convinced. *The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient, in Meekness instructing those that*

that oppose themselves, 2 TIM. ii. 24, 25.

These are the Chief of the unlawful Ways that too many take in *contending* for what they call *their Faith*. Let us see now what is the right Way of performing this Duty, which we ought to follow.

First then, It is manifest that he who *contends* rightly for the *Faith*, ought well to know what this *Faith* is, it being most foolish for any Man to contend for what he is ignorant of. And this *Faith*, I have shewn from my Text, neither does nor ought to contain any more than what is necessary to *the common Salvation*, which is the only Aim of every good Christian.

Numberless Volumes have been written concerning Doctrines not necessary to Salvation; and to such a Writer we may well apply the Words of our Blessed Saviour to *Martha*: *Thou art careful and troubled about many Things, but one Thing is needful*, LUK. x. 41. I deny not but that some of these Books which are soberly written, may be read with Profit, to guard us against sundry Errors, whereby some Men endeavour to corrupt Religion; but that which alone is truly *needful*, and which we ought always to keep in View, is, “What is that *Faith* which was once “*delivered unto the Saints*? What are

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“ those Things which Christ and his Apostles taught to be necessary for *the common Salvation?*” He who has so much Religion as will secure his eternal Salvation, and thereby *gives Diligence to make his Calling and Election sure* (2 PET. i. 10.) needs not give himself much Trouble about many other Questions which have been and are wholly disputed among Christians. Let any Man, even of a common Capacity, read and study the Holy Scriptures with this View; and it will be very easy for him there to discover what are those Things which God requires from us all, in order to our Salvation; and to distinguish them from other Things of an inferior or other Nature; as I have already said.

Secondly, He that would rightly contend for the *Faith*, ought to be well informed upon what this *Faith* is grounded. For no wise or good Man will ever contend for a Belief or Opinion which he looks upon to be groundless; and where a Man knows no Ground for any Thing, it is the same Thing to him as if it had none.

The Grounds by which the *Christian Faith*, or Religion is supported, are clear Reason and divine Revelation. The Being of

of God, with his Attributes, and all the moral Part of Religion, which contains our Duty to God, to ourselves, and to all other Men, are clearly made known, and even demonstrated to us by Reason, and farther confirmed by Revelation. The positive Parts of Religion, such as the Doctrines of the Blessed Trinity, of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, of the Resurrection from the Dead, of Baptism, and of the Lord's Supper, are made known and proved to us by Revelation alone; which Revelation is contained in the Holy Scriptures. And that this is truly a divine Revelation, is beyond Question proved unto us by the many Prophecies which were wrought for the Confirmation of it: Of all which we have Evidence beyond all reasonable Exception, from the Testimony of the Apostles, and others who were Eye-Witnesses of the Miracles and other Facts set forth, and laid down their Lives for this their Testimony, is fully shewn in many excellent Discourses that have been written in the Defence of Christianity, and some of them adapted to every common Capacity.

Thirdly, Since to contend for the Faith is to strive and endeavour to our Power that true Religion may be propagated and spread

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spread abroad in the World; hence it — follows that every one who would do this as he ought, should *be ready always* (upon proper Occasions) *to give an Answer to every Man that asketh him a Reason of the Hope that is in him*: As St. Peter directs, 1 PET. iii. 15. That is to say, a Reason why he hopes to be saved in that Faith or Religion which he professes; which it will be no hard Matter for him to do, if he understands the plain and reasonable Grounds upon which he embraces Christianity.

Disputation indeed is an Art; for want of Skill therein, a Man who has Truth on his Side may often be baffled by a cunning Sophister. It is not therefore every Man that must set up for a Disputant in Religion. But whenever a Man is properly called upon to shew the Grounds and Reasons of his *Faith*, he ought to be ready to do it in the best Manner he can, to the Glory of God, and the Edification of his Neighbour.

Fourthly, We whom God's Providence has called to the Office of the Ministry, ought in a particular Manner, as long as we are able, to *contend for the Faith*, by preaching and teaching it to the People. I need not quote particular Passages of

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Holy Scripture to those who are every Day conversant in it. It is our Duty (as I have already said) *to preach the Word, to be instant in Season, out of Season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.* We must avoid *foolish and unlearned Questions*, and only endeavour to make those who hear us *wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus* (2 TIM. iii. 15.) for which End and Purpose we must teach *those who have believed in God, to be careful to maintain good Works*, TIT. iii. 8. Much more might be added to the same Purpose, but to you (my Brethren) it is needless.

— Only one Thing more I cannot omit, which is, that as often as we ascend the Pulpit, we should not look upon ourselves as Orators, or Philosophers, or Persons coming there only to perform an Exercise; but as the Messengers of God to the People. And therefore that as all our Discourses from thence ought to be agreeable to Reason, which is God's Voice by Nature, and to Holy Scripture, which is the Voice of the same God by Revelation; so should they be delivered in such a grave and authoritative Manner, as may be agreeable to the Office which we bear, and may shew that we are *in earnest*

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in what we are doing. That Clergyman has much to answer for, who by a cold, indistinct, unconcerned, or careless Delivery, renders a well composed, rational, and scriptural Sermon in a great Measure ineffectual. Let us all seriously consider this.

Lastly, My Text sufficiently suggests to us, that it is the Duty of every one of us, as we have Ability and Opportunity, *earnestly to contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*. Parents ought to *train up their Children in the Way wherein they should go, that when they are old they may not depart from it*, PROV. xxii. 6. They who have the Care of Youth committed to them, ought early to instruct them in Virtue and Piety, that *from the Time of Childhood they may know the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto Salvation*, 2 TIM. iii. 15. Masters of Families ought to take Care that *their House*, as well as themselves, *should serve the Lord*, JOS. xxiv. 15. Neighbours *should exhort one another, while it is called to Day, lest any be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin*, HEB. iii. 13. and *should consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to good Works*, HEB. x. 24. These Things are so well known, that I need

- need not spend Time in proving of them.
- And since *Faith without Works is dead* (JAM. ii. 26.) nor does any Thing upon Earth tend more to promote true Religion, than Holiness of Life in those who profess it, it ought to be our constant Care to let *our Light so shine before Men, that they seeing our good Works may follow our Example, and thereby glorify our Father which is in Heaven*, MAT. v. 16. Which that we may all do, as becometh good Christians, God of his Mercy grant, for the Sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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*Eternal Salvation the only End and
Design of Religion.*

IN A
S E R M O N

Preached at the

PARISH-CHURCH

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St. *Warburgh*, DUBLIN,

ON SUNDAY, *October 3*, 1714.

By EDWARD SYNGE, D.D. Now Lord
Archbishop of *TUAM*.

Published for the better Information of those to
whom it has been much Misrepresented.

THE SECOND EDITION.

*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not--
doth not behave it self unseemly--- is not easily provo-
ked--- thinketh no evil--- Beareth all things, believ-
eth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,
1 Cor. 13. 4, &c.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. WILLIAMSON, near Gray's
Inn-Gate in Holbourn. 1726.

Advertisement.

THIS Discourse has no Dependence, as to the Argument of it, upon that which was preached before it on the same *TEXT* ; And therefore I publish it alone by myself, only to put a Stop to the false and altogether groundless Reports that have been spread abroad of it.

Edw. Syng



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MATTH. XIX. xvi.

And behold one came and said unto him, Good Master, What good Thing shall I do, that I may have Eternal Life ?

IN a former Discourse upon these Words, as a Ground-work for what I should think proper to draw from the whole Story, of which my Text is the Beginning, I noted unto you, that the Person who put this Question to our Blessed Saviour, was a young Man, a rich Man, and that he came first with a sincere Design to be inform'd : Which being premised, the first Observation which I drew from the Text, was this :

That even in the time of Youth, Health and Prosperity, we ought to be very careful, and much concerned about our eternal Salvation. And having briefly repeated what before I had more largely discoursed upon this Point (with a Repetition of which I will not trouble the Reader) I come now to a Second Observation from the Words, which is this :

That the only End and Design which each Man ought to propose to himself in his Religion, is the attainment of Everlasting Life, or Eternal Salvation, as we usually express it : Which I intend in this Discourse to handle.

At the time of our Saviour's being upon the Earth, the Jewish Church was divided into two grand Parties ; namely, the Pharisees and the Sadducees : And by the

Circumstances of the Story, it is more than probable that this young Man was one of the Pharisees. At the same time also the Jewish Doctors gave themselves Liberty of advancing diverse Opinions, and introducing several Practices, under the Name of *Traditions*, that were not warranted by the Word of God. Now the young Man in my Text does not desire to be instructed how he may dispute with Learning or Subtilty upon the several Controversies which then were very commonly debated, or how he might confound or get the Victory over the opposite Party, when at any time he should engage in disputation with them: No! his Salvation was what alone possess'd his Thoughts: Nor did he on this Occasion set a Value upon any thing that did not conduce unto it: And coming to our Blessed Lord as to his Guide in Religion; all the Questions that could on this account be put unto him, he thought to be sufficiently comprehended under this one, *What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?* And in like manner the Jailor at *Philippi*, being fully convinc'd by the miraculous Earthquake, which shook the Foundations, and opened all the Doors of the Prison, that *Paul* and *Silas* were true Servants and Messengers of God; he had no other Question to put to them but this one, to the very same purpose with my Text; *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Acts 16. 30.

If there be a necessity of any Proof in a Matter that of it self seems so very plain; For the better Confirmation of this Point, we may have recourse to the Two following Considerations.

First, That this, and none other, is the main End and grand Motive that is propos'd to us by God himself.

What God is pleas'd to lay before us as the End and Design of our embracing Religion, ought accordingly to be receiv'd and entertain'd by us. Let us then have recourse to the holy Scriptures, and there enquire with what design our Saviour came to teach Religion, and with what View we are requir'd to embrace it.

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Whereas Mankind partly by their original Corruption, more by their actual Transgressions, were become Children of Wrath, and unqualify'd for that Eternal Happiness for which they were at first created; the very Business of our Saviour into the World was to shew and bring them back into the way of Salvation, or to *save which was lost*, as he himself expresses it, *Matt. 18.*

And when he sends his Apostles abroad to preach the Gospel, this is the only Motive that he gives them whereby to bring Men over to embrace it: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*, Mark 16. 16. And to the same purpose he tells us, *John 3. 16.* That God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son: For what End and purpose? Why, as it immediately follows, *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. And in the Prayer which he makes unto his heavenly Father, he has left it upon Record for our support and Comfort, that he had the power to give everlasting life to as many as God had given him, *John 17. 2.*

Many more Passages of holy Scripture might be added to these, if in so plain a Case there were any necessity for it; but instead thereof I proceed to a second Consideration whereby this same Point is established; and that is,

That the Prospect of eternal Salvation is the only thing sufficient to encourage and support a good Man under all the Difficulties which a religious Course of life may, and often does in this World, expose him to. In every Work which a prudent Man undertakes, though he proposes to himself ought always to counter-balance whatever Trouble or Difficulty may probably be foreseen or apprehended to be in the Work itself. Now in the strict Profession and Practice of Religion, there are many Difficulties and Hardships very often to be encountered; We must strive and struggle with our unclean Lusts and Passions, arm our selves against all the Temptations of the World and wicked Men, and withstand the Danger that often threatens, and bear with

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Patience the Evil which sometimes falls upon a Man for the doing of his Duty : We must continually watch and be upon our guard against all the Wiles and Devices of Satan ; and, to say all in one word, must be ready to lay down even Life it self, if God should call us to it, for the sake of our Duty and good Conscience.

Now what View, Prospect or Consideration is that that can support a Man's Mind, and bear him up with courage against all these things that are so uneasy, some of them even terrible to our very Nature ? Honour and Credit, Health, Wealth and Prosperity, sometimes indeed in this World a Part of the Reward of Vertue and Piety : But these and all other things this side the Grave are very uncertain : Or, if they were not so, yet how can any bare Temporal Thing whatsoever be a sufficient Motive to any Man to lay down his Life even in the best Cause, when he knows that Death must wholly deprive him of what is proposed to him as a Reward ?

But if once a Man becomes strongly possessed with the Truth, that there really is such a Thing as eternal Happiness, and that Religion is the sure and only way to obtain it ; this will make him despise all Difficulties that give him opposition in his Passage to it ; Let Troubles and Persecutions fall never so heavy upon him ; yet if it be for the sake of God and a good Conscience, he will comfort himself with this, that *our light Afflictions which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. And keep close to his Duty, even under the greatest Hardships that may befall him for it, He will reckon, with St Paul, *That the Sufferings of this present Time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us* Rom. 8. 18.

And thus from these two Considerations, I think fully appears that eternal Salvation is the only End and Design that a Man ought to propose to himself in Religion : Because this is the very End that God

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before us : And this is the only Consideration that effectually support us under all the Hardships and Difficulties which our Duty obliges us to bear or encounter.

And indeed the Truth of this Observation is so very plain and evident, that no Man who has a sense of any Religion whatsoever, will dare do deny it, if the Question be put home to him. Ask a *Protestant*, or *Papist*, or any Man who professes to serve and fear God, for what he so does ; and he will tell you, that 'tis because he hopes to be thereby everlastingly sav'd. And ask him farther, whether he would continue in that Profession of which he is, if he did not believe that he shall be sav'd in and by it ; and he will readily tell you, he would not : Both which together are as plain an Acknowledgment as well can be, that the only End that every Man proposes, or at least ought to propose in Religion, is his everlasting Salvation : Which was the Observation but now drawn from the Text.

From this Doctrine thus establish'd, several Inferences of great Moment and Importance may very clearly be drawn.

As first, From hence we may learn what is the only View or Design with which every *Religious Action* ought to be perform'd.

These Actions are of several sorts, namely some immediately respecting God alone ; as Prayer and Praise, receiving the holy Communion, and drawing nigh unto him in any of his Ordinances : Others having relation to our Neighbour ; as Justice, Truth, Mercy, Charity : Others again most immediately terminating upon our selves ; as Temperance, Patience, Mortification and Self-denial. In a word, every thing that is done in conformity, and upon a Principle of Obedience to any Command of God, is what I mean by a *Religious Action*. Now when any such Action as this is at any time perform'd, the only Reason and Motive to him that does it, ought to be this, and only this ; namely, that such an Action is pleasing to God, and that

that he will therefore reward it in the Life to come

For since whatever is the true End and Design of whole, ought also to be the End and Design of all every the Parts that make it up ; and the whole Religion consists in the aggregate of Religious Action. If the End and Design of all Religion be nothing but Eternal Salvation, as has been already plainly shewn ; it necessarily follows, that the same ought so to be the End and Design of every particular Religious Action.

But it may be objected, that God himself proposes to us another End also of Religion, at least in *Consolation* with that of everlasting Happiness ; I mean, *Comfort* and *Prosperity* in this World, which he has been pleas'd to set before us, if not as a certain Reward, a probable one however, of true Piety. Thus the wise Man speaking of Religion under the Name of *Wisdom* recommends it unto us by this Consideration, among others, that *length of Days is in her right hand, and her left hand riches and honour, and that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. 16, 17. To the very same purpose also St. Paul tells us, that *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come* 1 Tim. 4. 8. If then a fair and reasonable Prospect even of temporal as well as eternal Good is thus set before us, the more effectually to win us over to the Practice of our Duty ; why may we not make the former, as well as the latter, in some measure the End and Design of our Religious Actions ?

In answer hereunto, I grant, that whatever God is thought fit to propose or promise to us as any sort of Reward for our good Actions ; as far as he has so propos'd or promis'd such a thing, so far and no farther may we have a View or Respect unto it. Now altho' he has been pleas'd somerimes to set before us even the good Things of this World as a Reward of Vertue, yet it is not with a design that we should at any time make them, or any of them, the End at which we aim in any virtuous

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ous Action, but only a *Means*, the more effectually to pursue that *great End* of Salvation, which for ever ought to be before us : And however an Action may otherwise be good in it self, yet if we stop at the temporal Reward which perhaps attends it, and do not refer even that to a farther and better End, the Action it self can never be pleasing or acceptable to God.

For Example, *Honour* or *Praise* in the sight of Man, is part of that temporal Encouragement which God has been pleased to propose to Religion, *Prov.* 3. 16. And a Man so lets his *light shine before Men*, that they may see his good works, and all this is intirely referr'd to the glorifying of God in order to his own and other Mens Salvation ; in all this he does no more than what Christ himself commands, and therefore will most certainly accept of, *Matth.* 5. 16. But when the Pharisees made this the *very End* of their good Actions, that they might be seen of Men, and this with no farther or better View, our blessed Saviour most plainly files them *Hypocrites*, and gives them to understand, that they are to expect no further Reward from God, *Matth.* 6. 1, &c. A little to encourage our Weakness, God is pleased to allure us with a Prospect even of *temporal Things* ; But that we may not set our Hearts upon such Trifles, we are often put in mind how little regard we ought to have unto them in comparison of the *Things* that are *Eternal*. The Kingdom of God and his righteousness are first to be sought, *Matth.* 6. 33. We must not labour for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, *Matth.* 6. 27. This is the one thing needful, *Luke* 10. 42. This is that *Treasure*, that goodly Pearl, for the Purchase of which a Man should be ready to part with all that he hath, *Matth.* 13. 44. 45.

Secondly, From what has been said, it will follow, that when any one attempts to bring another over to the Profession of the true Religion, it ought to be with this, and no other Design, namely, That he may promote and put forward the Salvation of his Neighbour.

— The Pharisees indeed compassed Sea and Land to make one Profelyte to their Religion: But so far were they from helping him forward hereby in the way to Heaven, that, on the contrary, they made him *twofold more the Child of Hell than themselves*, Matth. 23. 15. And the ways that many have taken to make Converts, rather Hypocrites, it seems to be too too evident, that their Design has been more to advance and strengthen a Party in this World, than to save the Souls of Men in the next. But if we are in Conscience bound to love our Neighbour with the very same sort and sincerity of Affection (tho' not the same Degree of it) wherewith we love our selves, Matth. 22. 39. Then, as our everlasting Happiness ought to be the great and only End and Design of our own Religion; so are we oblig'd to have the same thing for our Neighbour alone in our view whenever we endeavour to make any Attempt to convert him from the error of his way, Jam. 5. 19, 20.

And if this plain Truth is once admitted, the Consequence will be, that whosoever at any time argues in disputes in defence of Religion, is bound to do it with all the Calmness and Gentleness that possibly he can. Sharpness and Anger, Heat and Violence, do commonly raise Mens Passions, and thereby obstruct their Reason, so as to make them much less capable than otherwise they would be, of a clear and solid Conviction. But Meekness and great Calmness in the Management of a Religious Dispute, as it is a great Argument of Charity, and a true Christian Concern for the Souls of Men; so does it very much incline an Adversary with Patience and Attention to hearken to whatever is offered unto him, and helps to keep him in a right Disposition for the reception of every Truth that appears to be any way necessary, or even profitable, in order to his Salvation. And therefore not only they whose Profession and Business it is to teach Religion, but every one also, who, upon any occasion, appears in the Defence of it, ought for ever to have those remarkable Words of S. Paul most deeply impress'd upon his Heart.

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Tim. 2. 24, 25. *The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient; in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth, &c.* Thus did Christ Jesus, the Son of God, himself teach and preach the Gospel whilst he was upon the Earth: The abominable Wickedness and Hypocrisy of the hard-hearted *Pharisees* he sometimes indeed rebuked with sharpness, but always with the greatest Gravity and Seriousness: But in all other his publick Sermons and private Discourses, nothing appears but the most rational and holy Doctrine deliver'd with all imaginable Temper and Sweetness. And, no doubt for the mighty Progress that Christianity soon after made in the World, was in a great measure owing to the same way of Teaching, that was us'd by the Apostles and first Preachers of it. But in Process of time, when Men began to mix their Passions with their Religion; and this Weakness of Nature prevail'd too much even among many of those who stood up in defence of the Truth; The Consequence was, that Men seemed to take delight in opposing one another, and often mistook each other's Meaning; whereby the Christian Church came to be so rent and divided into Sects and Parties, as (without the extraordinary Goodness and Mercy of God do interpose) to give us very little hope of its ever being again restor'd to that Union which once it so happily enjoy'd.

Thirdly, From what has been said, it will also follow, that nothing ought to be receiv'd as a *Part of Religion*, but what is necessary to Salvation.

For the better understanding of this Inference, we must take notice of a plain and rational Distinction between a *Part of Religion*, and a *Circumstance* of it. When any thing is so taken into the Body of Religion, as to be look'd upon as perpetual and unchangeable; This is what we reckon to be a *Part* of it. On the contrary, However a thing may by Law or Custom be ordinarily or constantly joined with any Religious

Performance; yet if the same be reputed to be changeable and separable from the Performance it self, and may by any Authority less than that of God, be accordingly so chang'd and separated; such a Thing, whatever it may be, with respect to Religion, is no more but a *Cumstance*, and not a *Part* of it. I know not better how to illustrate this than by a *Similitude* drawn from a Man and his Garments. All the Vitals and every Limb of Man's Body is a *Part* of him: Take away his Vitals and you destroy his Being; Take away a Limb from him, and you Lam or Maim him; Or add a Limb to him (if the Thing were possible) and you make him a Monster: But as for the Cloaths he wears, they may be altered or changed, as the Season of the Year, the Custom of the Place, or any other Rule which in such Cases is to be observed shall direct, without any Damage done to the Man himself. In like manner — To love God, to Fear, Worship and Serve him; To be Just, True, Peaceable, Humble, Charitable, Sobber and Temperate; To be received into the Church by Baptism, and after that to partake often of the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; These I say, and every other thing which the Law of God himself requires, are always to be reputed as *Parts* of Religion; and, as such to be perpetual and unalterable. But the particular Hour when a Congregation should meet to Worship God; the Place where they should Assemble; the particular Form of Words in which they should offer up their Devotions, and the Posture of Body which upon that occasion they should observe. These and such like Things as these, as by lawful Authority they are or may be appointed and seld for the sake of Decency and Order; so being subject by the same Authority to be changed or altered, if there be just Reason for it; they are ever to be reputed and look'd upon in themselves not as the *Parts* of Religion, but as the *Modes* and *Cumstances*; or (as I may speak) as the Dress or Garb of it,

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And this Distinction being thus premised, the Truth of the Inference which I have but now laid down, will stand in need of very much Proof. For since the End and Design of every part of a Thing ought always to be the same with that of the Whole, and the true Design of Religion is and ought to be nothing else but Eternal Salvation; it follows, that whatever is unnecessary in order to this End, ought never to be received or owned as a *Part* of Religion.

Upon this Principle thus established, even tho' we had no other Ground to go upon, we might very justly reject a great many of those Inventions which the Church of *Rome* has not only established within her self, but would impose upon all others. That Church has adopted sundry Things into the very Body of her Religion, and as *Parts* of it, that never were delivered down by Christ or his Apostles: Such as Praying to Saints, Worshipping of Images, Transubstantiation, Worshipping of the Host, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Purgatory, Prayers and Masses for the Dead, the Pope's Supremacy, and their Church's Infallibility. These Things, I say, they Teach and Practice, as being all of them now) perpetual, and for ever to be kept in the Christian Church; and consequently with them they are no less than *Parts* of Religion.

Now altho' we have abundant Arguments to prove these fore-named Particulars to be false, and some of them to be Unlawful and Wicked; yet supposing this to be laid aside, it were Ground sufficient for us to reject them (even tho' we had no other Objection against them, as we have many) that they would impose upon us as no less than *Parts* of the Christian Religion. For as nothing is to be received as a *Part* of Religion, but what is necessary to Salvation, so all these Things which I have named (even supposing they were Lawful, which they are very far from, yet) are manifestly at least unnecessary in order to this End. For nothing can be necessary to Salvation, but what God has commanded; and all his Commands are, either
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Expressly, or by Consequence, contain'd in the Scriptures: Let them be search'd then from the beginning to the ending; and so far are they from the Suggestion of any of these things, as commanded by God; that, on the contrary, they are wholly foreign concerning them all, except it be that some of them are therein very manifestly forbidden. If we had more then to say against these *Innovations* of the Roman Church (as indeed we have a great deal) yet this alone would be ground enough for us to Reject them, namely, because they would put them upon us as *Parts of Religion*, and yet they are manifestly not necessary to Salvation.

But they who dissent from our establish'd Church endeavour to turn this very Argument upon us; and we reject the *Impositions* of the Church of Rome, as divers *other Reasons*, so for *this* also in particular (which even alone would be sufficient) namely, because they are not necessary to Salvation; so do they sometimes alledge, that they have the same ground to refuse the Cross after Baptism, kneeling at the Holy Communion, wearing of a *Surplice* in the Performance of Divine Service, the use of the Ring in Matrimony, and the rest of our *Ceremonies*; even because 'tis on both sides confessed, that these things are in their nature indifferent, tho' not forbidden of God, yet not made necessary by any Command or Appointment of his.

But the Insufficiency of this Argument as levell'd against us, will immediately appear, if it be considered that our Church never had the least Thought of imposing her *Ceremonies* as *Parts of Religion*, but only as *Circumstances* of it, † and Things in their nature alterable by the same Authority that impos'd them. Now also it is most true, that we ought not to receive any thing

† Every particular or National Church hath Authority to ordain, change and abolish Ceremonies or Rites of the Church, ordained only by Man's Authority, so that all things be done to the edifying. Art. 34.

Part of Religion, if it be not necessary to Salvation ; it will not in the least follow, but that *Lawful Authority* may in many cases, for Order sake, and to avoid confusion, prescribe and determine the Modes and circumstances (which are things very different from the nature) of it, and that we may be oblig'd to yield Obedience, and be conformable to such Determination.

The Fourth and last Inference which I shall draw from what has been said, is this, That all Questions and disputes concerning such things as are no way necessary to Salvation, ought as much as possible to be avoided and excluded from Religion.

What vast and numberless Volumes of *Religious Controversies* have been publish'd, even to the Disturbance and Distraction of the World ? But if all such Writers seriously put this Question upon every Point which they handl'd, *Is this necessary to Salvation ? And Is this necessary to Salvation ?* both the Number and Bulk of such Books had been brought within a *very narrow Compass*. Indeed if *Learned Men* do soberly and peaceably debate even such Points as are not perhaps of any great necessity, and give no disturbance on this account to any, I think they are not at all to be blam'd : But if the design of *Religion*, and of every part of it, be nothing else but the Salvation of Man ; whatever Questions and Disputations are of no Importance towards this great End, ought not at all to be intermix'd with it.

Hear what *St. Paul* says touching this matter, *Titus 3.* *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that*

the particular Forms of Divine Worship and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being Things in their own Nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged, &c. face to the Book of Common Prayer.

The keeping or omitting of a Ceremony, in it self considered is but a small thing ; yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common Order and Discipline, is a small Offence before God. Discourse of Ceremonies prefixt to the Common-Prayer-Book in Quarto and Folio.

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thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in might be careful to maintain good works: These things good and profitable unto Men. That is to say, These the things which conduce to our Salvation: But *not* foolish Questions, and Genealogies, and Contentions, and wrivings about the Law. But why must these things be avoided? Why, because they are unprofitable and void. That is, make nothing towards our Salvation, which is the only true End of Religion.

Hear him again yet farther, 2 Tim. 2. 22, 23. *youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they breed strife; and thereby do only hinder a Man of the Race that is set before him.*

The antient Poets have a Fable of *Atalanta*, which they represent as a Virgin so swift of Foot, that no Man could out-run her. One who undertook to run a Race with her, contriv'd the matter so as to throw a golden Apple in her Way, and then a Second, and after that a Third, in the same manner; which whilst she stopped to gather up, the other out-stript her, and got the Victory. In like manner, the Devil, in order to hinder us in our Christian Course, not only lays the Temptations of Pleasure and Profit in our Way, but also endeavours to raise our vain Curiosity, by starting a number of subtil and useles Questions: And whilst our Minds are too much busied about these Trifles, we neglect true Faith, Piety, Charity, and other things that are of absolute necessity in order to the making our Calling and Election sure.

I shall conclude this Discourse with the Words of St. Paul, only with a small variation of the Expression Phil. 3. 13, 14. *Forgetting those things which are unprofitable, and reaching forth unto those things which are necessary, let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. To which Prize God by his infinite Mercy bring us all, &c.*

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*The Divine Authority of Church-
Government, and Episcopacy,
stated and asserted, upon Prin-
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I N A
S E R M O N

At the Consecration of
The Right Reverend Father in God,
Dr. PETER BROWN,

L A T E
Provost of *Trinity College, Dub-
lin*, and now Lord Bishop of
CORKE and ROSSE:

Preached at the College Chapel on
Sunday, April 2. 1710.

By EDWARD SYNGE D. D.

L O N D O N: Printed for the Executors
of R. SARE, and sold by R. WILLIAMSON
near *Grays-Inn Gate* in *Holborn*, 1726.

The Power Authority of Church
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I TIM. V. 17.

Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double Honour; especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine.

THAT *Timothy* was Bishop of *Ephesus*, is what, for about fourteen hundred Years, was never once, that we can find, so much as doubted, or called into question in the Christian Church. And they who, of late Years, do deny him to have been a *Bishop*, in the Sense that we now understand the word; yet, if they allow the Authority of this Epistle, must of necessity grant, that he was invested in all the Power, which any Orthodox Person, of that Order either does, or ever did claim by virtue of any Divine or Apostolick Institution. He was to charge those that were under him what they should teach, (*ch. 1. v. 3.*) therefore he had the supervising of their *Doctrine*: A Caution is given him, not to rebuke an *Elder* or use him roughly (*ch. 5. v. 1.*) and another, that against an *Elder* he should not receive an *Accusation* but before two or three *Witnesses*; that is to say, not upon the single Testimony of one Person, (*v. 19*) therefore he had a Jurisdiction, not only over the People, but over the *Presbyters* also. And, to omit other Instances, a Charge is directed, not to the Body of the *Presbyters* of that Church, but

to himself, in his own single Person, that he should *Lay hands suddenly on no man*, (v. 22) which shews, at least, that the Power of Ordination there was so in him, as not regularly to be performed without him: And since such a certain Measure of *Ecclesiastical Power*, lawfully conferred, is that which constitutes and makes a *Bishop*, as he stands distinguished from a *Presbyter*; or (to speak in the Language of the Schools) is the *ratio formalis* of *Episcopacy*; he must be a very skilful distinguisher indeed, who can find material, or even a notional, difference between a *Bishop* and one who, to all intents and purposes, is lawfully possessed of *Episcopal Authority*.

Now the Design of this Epistle, as St. Paul himself declares, is to instruct *Timothy* how and after what manner he should manage and demean himself in the discharge of so important an Office, as this with which he was entrusted. *How he ought to behave himself in the House of God, which is the Church* (as it is express'd ch. 3. v. 15.) And among many other excellent Rules that are given him, partly for his own personal Conduct, and partly to be pressed and inculcated upon those over whom he had the charge, we have this for one, which I have chosen, as the properest Subject I could think of for this present occasion: *Let the Elders that Rule well, &c.*

From the words we may gather these four Observations:

I. *First*, That in the Christian Church there is a Government, which is not derived from the Civil Power. This is evidently supposed in the Text. For at the time when this Epistle was written, the Church was so far from receiving any Privilege, or Countenance, from the Temporal Authority,

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Authority, that it was almost every where discouraged and persecuted by it. And yet even then, we find, by my Text, among the Christians there were certain *πρόσωπα*, Presidents, Persons who bore rule over the rest.

II. Secondly, That *this Government is to be managed and administered by (those who in my Text are called) the Elders.* The Elders we see are the Persons here spoken of as the Rulers.

III. Thirdly, That *such Elders as do well acquit themselves of the Office of Government, ought justly to meet with very great Honour and Esteem in the Church; even double Honour, as my Text expresses it.*

IV. Fourthly and Lastly, That *it ought to be no small Addition to the Honour and Esteem of such an Elder, if, besides the faithful Administration of his Government, he also labours in the Word and Doctrine. Let the Elders that rule well, &c.*

I. I begin with the *First* of these Observations; namely, that *in the Christian Church there is a Government which is not derived from the Civil Power.* This I have told you is plainly supposed in the Text: And to the same purpose we meet with other very express Passages in the *New Testament.* Thus St. Paul bids the *Thessalonians* to know *them which*—are over them in the Lord, (1 Thes. 5. 12.) and the *Hebrews* to remember *them which have the rule over them,* (ch. 13. v. 7) and again, *obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves: for they watch for your Souls,* says he (v. 17.) But the undoubted Truth of this Observation will more fully appear, if we consider,

First, The very Nature of a Society in general: And,

Secondly, The Essential Parts and Ingredients that must go together to constitute a Government.

As to the former of these ; Where an incorporated Society is, there of necessity must Order and Government also be ; this is included in the very Nature and Notion of the thing it self : A Number of Men without any settled Order or Government, however possibly their Inclinations may for a while keep them in some sort of Agreement, yet still are no more nor better than a Multitude : But the same or like Number, having some established Rules to walk by and also some Government amongst them to enforce the Observation of those Rules, immediately become what we call a Society. Now that the Church, by the Institution of Christ alone and antecedently to any Power or Privilege derived unto it from the Civil Authority, is really and truly a Society, appears so very plainly from all the Representations that are made of it in the Holy Scripture, by a King and his Kingdom, a Master and his Family, a Shepherd and his Flock ; and above all, by the Members of a Body knit and joined together under one Head, that I need not stand to offer any further or more particular Proof of it. If then Order and Government be even essential to the very Nature of a Society, and the Christian Church, before any Incorporation thereof by the Civil Power, be really a Society ; it demonstratively follows that in the Christian Church there is and must be a Government that is not derived from the Civil Power, which is the thing to be proved.

Then, as to the second thing, that is to say, the Essential Parts and Ingredients of a Government

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ment: Where all the *Parts* of any thing are regularly and orderly joined together, there of necessity the *Whole* must be. Now the *Parts* or necessary Ingredients of a *Government* are neither more nor less than these three. First a Power of making Laws and Constitutions for the Society, in order to the promoting the End and Design of it. Secondly, an Appointment of Ministers or proper Officers for the Performance of all necessary Offices or Functions belonging to it: And Thirdly a Power to inflict proper Punishments upon such Members of the Community as are refractory and disobedient to its Laws and Constitutions. Where these three things are conjoined together in any Society, there is *Government*: Where all or any of them are wanting, there is either no Government at all, or (what is not much better) a very lame and imperfect one. If then it fully and sufficiently appears, that all these things are in the *Christian Church*, by its very Original Constitution, and without any Derivation of all or any of them from the Temporal Authority; it must of necessity put the Truth of my first Observation beyond all reasonable Doubt or Exception.

First then, For the Power of making Laws and Constitutions. And here, that our Blessed Saviour, not only as he is God Co-eternal and Coequal with the Father, but as he is Man also, and considered in the Capacity of Head of his Church, has a Supreme Power of making Laws, to which all Mankind are bound to come in and submit themselves, can be doubted by no one who believes what he has asserted of himself, (*Matth.* 28. 18.) that *all Power is given unto him in Heaven and in Earth.* By Virtue of this Power he

- abrogated all the Ceremonial Laws of *Moses blotting out the Hand-writing of Ordinances*, (Col. 2. 14.) confirmed the Moral Law, making it the Law of his Church, and the Observation of it a necessary Condition of obtaining eternal Happiness: *If thou wilt enter into life* (says he) *keep the Commandments* (Matth. 19. 17.) and has made and enacted several positive Laws and Constitutions, to remain in his Church to the End of the World: Thus he has ordained that the Gospel should be preached in all the World. *Go and teach all Nations* (Matth. 28. 19.) That
- all who are received into his Church, shall be admitted into it by Baptism, *baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; and that all faithful Christians should eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup, which he has appointed, in commemoration of his Death and Passion: *Do this in remembrance of me*, (Luke 22. 19.) And besides this Supreme Power of making Laws, which resides in *Christ alone*; there is and must be sure in the Church, as in all other Societies whatsoever, a subordinate Power of making Rules and Constitutions for the better regulating it self within it self: Provided that such Laws and Constitutions are not repugnant to any Obligation under which the Members of the Society do lie, to any other Superior Authority. This Power *St. Paul* plainly supposes and refers to, when he directs the Church of *Corinth*, *that all things be done to edifying*, (1 Cor. 14. 26.) *decently and in order*; (v. 40.) that is to say, that they should settle such Rules and Methods among themselves, for the Management of their publick and religious Assemblies, as might best keep out all Disorder and Confusion, and most tend to the Edification of

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on of the People: Some of which Rules he himself, by his Apostolick Authority, makes for them, (v. 27, &c.) and leaves the rest to themselves, to settle according to the general Direction that he had given them. And so much shall suffice for the first *Essential Part or Ingredient of Government*, the *Power of making Laws and Constitutions*, which is *supreme in Christ* the Head of the Church, and *subordinate* to him, in the Church it self. I proceed to the

Second, Which is the Appointment of Ministers or proper Officers for the performance of all necessary Offices or Functions belonging to the Society. It is St. Paul's own Comparison, that, as proper Members in the natural Body are required for the Execution of the several Functions belonging to it, and without which it would be but an useless and insignificant Lump, (for if the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 1 Cor. 12. 17.) so in a Church or any other Society, it is no less requisite that there should be proper Persons appointed, for the doing or performing of the several Offices that are agreeable to the Nature of the Community, and without which it would be little better than a confused Multitude. Now to prove that such an Appointment of proper Officers as this there is in the Christian Church; and that not at all derived from the Temporal Authority, I shall not only insist upon what the Apostle tells us, that *God hath set some in the Church; first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then Gifts of Healing, Helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues*; (v. 28.) because to this perhaps it may be answered, that some,

at least, of the Offices here mentioned were only temporary for the present Occasion, and not designed to be of standing and perpetual Continuance; but shall think it sufficient to say, that whatever Ministerial Office was, or is necessary to be performed, in order to the Edification or Salvation of Men; our Blessed Saviour himself gave unto his Apostles full Power, not only to do or perform the same, while they should remain upon Earth, but also to appoint other Persons for the same purpose, where they could not be present themselves, or when they should depart from out of this World: All which is by all Christians allowed to be fully comprehended in those words of his to them: *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*, (John 20. 21.) And that in pursuance of this Power the Apostles did actually appoint such Persons to take part with, and succeed them in all the constant, necessary, and perpetual Parts of their holy Function, is what no Man sure can deny; or if he does, it may abundantly be proved, from the Care they took to fill up their Number by putting *Matthias* into the place of *Judas* (Acts 1. 21, &c.) and to institute the Order of Deacons as soon as they found there was occasion for it (Acts 6. 2.) from *St. Paul's* leaving *Timothy* at *Ephesus*, and *Titus* at *Crete*, with Power and Instruction for the due Regulation of those Churches (as appears by his Epistles to them) and from the particular Direction to the former, that what he had heard from *St. Paul*, he should commit to faithfull Men, who should be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2. 2.) and to the latter, that he should ordain Elders in every City (Tit. 1. 5.) to say nothing, as yet of the like Persons, who, as Antiquity informs us, were in the same manner appointed in other Churches.

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Churches. But what certain Orders or Degrees of Men the Apostles ordained or appointed, for ever to continue in the Church, for the constant and regular discharging of the several Parts of the Gospel Ministry, will, at least in part, be by and by the Subject of another and farther Enquiry. In the mean time I pass on to the

Third *Essential Part of Government*, which is the Power of inflicting proper Punishments upon the refractory and disobedient Members of the Society. And that such a Power as this is with the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matth. 16. 19.) immediately derived from Christ to his Church; that is to say, a Power to bind and loose, (Matth. 16. 19. & 18. 18.) to remit and retain Sins (John 20. 23.) to put a Man into the State of a Heathen or Publican, who shall neglect to hear the Church (Matth. 18. 17) to rebuke sharply (Tit. 1. 13.) to receive an Accusation, and that even against an Elder (1 Tim. 5. 19) to judge concerning a wicked Person, (1 Cor. 5. 3.) to deliver such an one to Satan, until he repent, (v. 5.) and to oblige all Christians to withdraw themselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly (2 Thess. 3. 6.) That a Power, I say, of inflicting such Punishments as these, is directly and immediately given by Christ to his Church, is so very clear from the several Passages of the New Testament, which I have now hinted at, that I need not sure offer any farther proof of it to any one, who owns the Authority of the Holy Scriptures. And what just fault could be found with the Angel, that is to say, the chief Pastor, of the Church in Pergamos, for suffering those in his Church, who held the Doctrine of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitans, (Rev. 2. 14, 15.) if he had not sufficient Authority,

rity, vested in him, to punish such Persons for their Wickedness, and to exclude them altogether from his Communion, in case they should refuse to repent and reform?

Now let us put these three things together. The Essential Parts or Ingredients that must meet together to constitute a *Government*, are, *First*, a Power of making Laws and Constitutions; *Secondly*, an Appointment of proper Officers, or Ministers; and *Thirdly*, a Power to inflict proper Punishments; and all this agreeably to the End and Design for which the Society is incorporated. But all these three things I have shewn to be in the *Christian Church*; and that without any Derivation of them, or any of them, from the Temporal Authority. Therefore, *In the Christian Church there is a Government, which is not derived from the Civil Power, which was my First Observation.*

But there is a plausible Objection against this Doctrine, made by Mr. *Hobbes* (*Leviath. c. 29.*) and taken up by others, who seem to copy after him; which is, that it is a thing of very dangerous Consequence, to allow of any *Government* that is no way dependent on the *Civil Power*: For this would be to *divide a Kingdom against itself*, to oblige a Man at one time to *serve two Masters*; both which things our Blessed Saviour himself represents as great Absurdities, (*Matth. 12. 25. & c. 6. 24.*) and indeed to erect *Imperium in Imperio*, a Kingdom within a Kingdom, which is contrary to the Rules of all sound Politicks: But a Government *no way* derived from the Civil Power, must, by consequence, be altogether *independent* of it: And therefore such a Government as this in the *Church*, cannot be admitted without overturning, or at least very much

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endangering the Peace of the State. But the seeming Force of this Objection will at once be wholly taken away, if it can be shewn beyond exception, that *the Government of the Church*, duly stated and limited, *neither is, nor can be any way dangerous to the Peace, or Security of any Kingdom, or Commonwealth whatsoever.*

First, Then I grant, that if the Government of the Church assumes more to itself, than what of Right belongs to it; if any Person, under the pretence of being the *Vicar of Christ*, and Successor of St. Peter, shall claim a Power of deposing Princes and absolving Subjects from their Allegiance, or of disposing of the Temporal Things of all Christians, in order to their Spiritual Good: or, if any Assembly under the Name of Christ's Kingdom, shall assume an Authority to abrogate and abolish all Statutes and Ordinances concerning Ecclesiastical Matters that, in their Judgment, are found noysome or unprofitable, and agree not with the Time: Such a Power as this, I say, if once allowed, must indeed be of the last Consequence to the Temporal Authority. But then they, who thus under the Name of Christ do assume to themselves what he has no way given them, are no better than Traitors and Rebels to the Civil State: And as such, ought to be punished and suppressed by the lawful Magistrate, who beareth not the Sword in vain, but is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon every one that doth Evil, and that without any Exception for Ecclesiastical Persons: (Rom. 13. 4.) But,

Secondly, That Government which leaves the Civil Magistracy in the full and free Possession of the utmost Extent of all the Power and Dominion, which it is, or any way can be lawfully invested with, cannot possibly be of the least

Danger

Danger to any Kingdom or Commonwealth whatsoever. Now the very utmost Extent of the *Civil Power* is to have a Dominion upon Earth uncontrollable, over the *Lives, Liberties, and Properties* of its Subjects: How far this Power or Dominion over each or any of these things may lawfully go, is not my business at present to enquire: But let the Extent of it be what it will, it neither is nor can be any way obstructed or controlled by the lawful Power of the *Church*: If a Man forfeits his *Life, his Liberty, or his Property* to the Law; whether the Law in itself be just or unjust, the Church has no Power to hinder the Execution of it. *Christ's Kingdom is not of this World*, And therefore his *Servants* have no Commission to fight, or use Force to support it, (*John 18. 36.*) And whatever Right of Resistance, or Self defence, a Man may have against an unjust or tyrannical Power, it is a *natural Right* derived unto him as he is a *Man* by the *Law of Nature* and Self-preservation, equally belonging to an *Infidel* and a *Christian*, and not in the least to be look'd on as a Privilege any way granted to the latter more than to the former. But

Thirdly, To take away all manner of Jealousie from the *Civil State*, there is yet a farther Answer to be given to this Objection: Which is, that the *Spiritual Power and Government* of the *Christian Church*, tho' no way derived from the *Civil Authority*; yet as to the Exercise of it, is far subject to its Guidance and Management, as to free the State from all just Apprehension of Danger upon this Account. No Temporal Magistracy upon Earth, can of itself give a Commission to any one authoritatively, and as God's Messenger, to teach and preach the Gospel, to admit

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Men into the Church by Baptism, to communicate unto them the Body and Blood of *Christ* by the outward Symbols of Bread and Wine, to bind or loose, remit or retain Sins, or to ordain others to perform, in the Name of *Christ*, all or any of these Divine Offices; the Power of doing all these things, being, as I have already shewn, immediately derived from *Christ* himself. But yet *as to the due Exercise of this Power*, the *Civil Legislature* may make good and wholesome Laws, not only for the better support of the Government of the Church, but also to oblige, and if occasion be, by proper Penalties to compel, even the Ministers and Governours of the Church to the faithful and diligent Performance of their several Duties, within their proper Sphere, and to restrain and hinder them from going beyond the Bounds and Limits of their Commission. That thus it was in the Jewish Church (whose Ecclesiastical Polity was immediately settled by God himself) appears not only from the Example of Holy *David* (who being a Prophet, had probably, the immediate Command of God for all that he did in settling the Courses of the Priests and Levites, 1 Chr. 24. 19.) but also from that of the best of the Kings of *Judah*; who without any particular Direction from God that appears, but only by Virtue of that Royal Authority wherewith God had intrusted them, did regulate and settle the Affairs of the Church with as much Care and Application as those of the State. Thus *Jehoshaphat sent Levites and they taught in Judah: Having the Book of the Law of the Lord with them* (2 Chr. 17. 8, 9.) *In Jerusalem also did he set of the Levites and of the Priests—for the Judgment of the Lord* (ch. 19. 8.) Thus *Hezekiah* commanded

commanded the Levites to *sanctifie themselves and the House of the Lord*, and to carry forth the *Filthiness out of the Holy Place* (ch. 29. 5.) Thus *Josiah* commanded *Hilkiah the Priest*, and the *Priests of the Second Order*, to go on with the Work of Reformation, (of which we read *Kings* 23. 4. &c.) and *Nehemiah*, or whoever else is meant by the *Tirshatha* (who was a Civil Magistrate tho' not with the Title of King) put the Children of *Habaiah* from the Priesthood and suffer'd them not to eat of the most holy things; and that because they could not make out their *Genealogy*, (*Ezra* 2. 62 63.) He also cast forth all the Household of *Tobiah* out of the Chamber, which *Eliashib the Priest* had prepared for him in the House of God; and commanded the Chambers to be cleansed, with other things relating to the Service of God (*Neh.* 13. 4. &c.) And (to put an end to these Instances) when *Abiathar* went beyond the Bounds of his Office; and, without any lawful Warrant, pretended to intermeddle in the disposal of the Throne and Kingdom, *Solomon* thrust him out from being Priest unto the Lord, (*1 Kings* 2. 27.)

Thus did the Civil Authority under the Mosaic Law, exert itself in the Regulation of Ecclesiastical Matters: And since, under the Gospel also, every Soul (which includes the Church as well as State) ought to be subject to the Higher Powers (*Ro.* 13. 1.) and submit to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King, as supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by him, (*1 Pet.* 2. 13, 14.) What imaginable reason can be given, why the Temporal Legislature may not make such Laws, with relation to the Church and Religion, as I have but just now affirmed (especially considering that Matters of

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Religion have often a great Influence even upon the outward Peace and Welfare of a People, (with which the Magistrate is more immediately entrusted) or why any Christian, of what sort soever, should refuse to give all Obedience unto such Laws, as long as they contain nothing that is contrary to the Laws of God?

And thus have I given, I think, a full and fair Answer to this Objection. The Government of the *Church* may (and so may *Religion* itself) be perverted and abused, to the embroiling and dividing of the *Civil State*: But then the State is invested with sufficient Power, if it will but make use of it, to punish and reform all such *Abuses*. But if the Church exceeds not the Limits of her proper Authority, she cannot in the least controul or obstruct the State in the disposal of the Lives, Liberties or Properties of its Subjects; and consequently, can create *no manner of Danger to it*. Or if any Danger may yet be apprehended, the *Civil State*, having power to make wholesome and good Laws even in *Ecclesiastical Affairs*, may easily prevent and take it away. A blind Obedience, indeed, is not due to any Master or *Father upon Earth*, (Mat. 23, 8, 9.) But the *lawful Commands* of two such *Masters* as the Church and State, can never be *contrary*, one to the other; and therefore there needs be no difficulty in giving all due *Obedience* to them both at one and the same time.

I proceed therefore to the *Second Observation*; which was,

II. That *the Government of the Christian Church is to be managed and administered by* (those who in my Text are called) *the Elders*.

And

And here; that the *Elders of the Church* are within itself, its proper Rulers and Governours; and that their Authority is not an arbitrary, despotick, or absolute Power; as if they were *Lords over God's Heritage*, (1 Pet. 5. 3) but altogether limited and bounded, not only by the immediate Laws of God or *Christ*, but also by the laudable Constitutions of the Church itself. All this, I say, is no matter of Controversy amongst any who do own that there is, or ought to be, any Government of the *Church* distinct from that of the *State* or Commonwealth. The only remaining Dispute then will be, who are the Persons here pointed out by the Title of *Elders*; or in other Terms, *What is that particular Form of Church Government that ought to obtain in the Christian Church.*

For the resolving of this Doubt, it will not, in my Opinion, at all avail us to advance any Criticisms, or enter into the least Disquisition concerning the meaning of the words *Bishop* and *Presbyter* or *Elder*: For however in a short time these words were used to denote two different Offices in the Christian Church; yet, upon a strict Enquiry, it will appear beyond any reasonable Exception, that in the *New Testament* they are altogether of promiscuous signification. In order therefore to the satisfactory clearing up of this matter, I shall propose and handle the two Questions; the one of *Fact*, the other of *Right*: namely,

First, What that Form of Government which (*de facto*) at first was every where settled throughout the Church.

Secondly, How far (*de Jure*) it may from the *Fact*, or any other way be concluded, what should

of Church Polity ought for ever to be retained among Christians.

In answer to the former of these Questions, I lay down two Conclusions.

The *first* is this : That immediately from, or a very few Years after, the Death of the Apostles, the Government of the Christian Church, in every part of it, throughout the whole World, was thus settled ; that one, taken from among the *Presbyters*, should in every convenient Distance or District, preside and rule over them, the Deacons and the People. This Conclusion need not stand to prove, or make good, from any Testimonies of the Ancients, because it is fully and freely granted by the most Learned of our Adversaries, *Du Moulin*, *Beza*, *Vedelius*, *Lauchius*, *Marlorat*, *Bochart*, (who none of them grant the *Divine Right* of Episcopacy) and even *Blondell* himself the greatest Champion that ever appeared against it) do, all of them, allow that this was the Form of Ecclesiastical Polity that then prevail'd ; and that the Ruler or President in every such District was called and distinguished by the Title of *Bishop*. See Appendix.

My *Second Conclusion* is, that, even in the Life-time of the Apostles, the very same Form of Ecclesiastical Polity was established in every Church, where some one of the Apostles themselves did not in his own Person perform the Episcopal Office. For the better understanding of which, we must take notice, that wherever an Apostle planted a Church, he might, if he thought so fit, retain the chief Government thereof to himself : Thus *St. Paul* had the care of all the Churches, (that is, of all within a convenient

nient distance of his own planting) at once upon him, (2 Cor. 11. 28) took his Circuit to visit the Churches in every City where he had preached, (Act. 15. 36.) went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the Churches, (v. 41.) And though absent from Corinth, yet, being at so convenient a distance as to receive an account of the affairs of that Church, he judges as tho' he were present concerning the case of the incestuous Corinthian, and commands in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he should be delivered unto Satan, &c. (1 Cor. 5. 3, 4, 5.) And, after this, he gives further direction that the same Person having repented of his Sin, should be restored to the Communion of the Church, and that they would confirm their love towards him: For, says he, *to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things to whom ye forgave any thing, I forgave also: for if I forgave any thing; to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it, in the person of Christ,* (1 Cor. 2. 8, 9, 10.) Thus did St Paul, at least for some time, retain the chief Government of the Churches of his own planting, in his own Hands: Nor is it to be doubted, but the other Apostles either did, or might have done, the very same thing. But whenever the Apostles by reason of their great distance, or being wholly taken up by the Affairs of other Churches could not attend to the exercise of Government in any particular Church which they had planted there they always placed a single Person to preside amongst, and bear rule over, not only the People, but the Presbyters also. And that this was really and truly the case, the Demonstration of the Learned Mr. Chillingworth, I think, is not to be answered. It runs thus:

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Either that Form of Church Government, which by the Confession of our Adversaries, *universally* obtained immediately after the Days of the Apostles, was the very same that was every where settled by the Apostles themselves; or else there must have been in a very short time, a change made throughout the whole Church, from that Form of Government which was settled by them. But such a change as this was impossible. And therefore there was no change at all. And that such a change as this was (morally speaking) no less than impossible, is thus, in my Opinion, farther demonstrated. For

If any such Change there was, it was an *universal* Change, made throughout the whole Christian Church, which at that time was spread far and wide, even beyond the Bounds of the *Roman* Empire, which was of vast Extent (there being no Orthodox Church that we can find immediately after the Apostles days, but what had a Bishop presiding amongst and over his Presbyters.) It was a Change in a *Matter of great moment*, namely, the Government of the Church of *Christ*, and the Exercise of that Power with which he had entrusted his Apostles, by them to be transmitted to others, in a constant Succession, in order to the Edification and Salvation of Men: It was a Change made or consented to, by the Primitive Christians, who were Men of *great and strict Piety*, and very *tenacious of their Customs* and Traditions (as appears in the Controversie about the Festival of *Easter*, besides other things.) It was a Change thoroughly completed in *very few Years*; within Eleven, or twelve at most, after the Death of St. *John*: And (to add no more) it was a Change that met with the *least Opposition* or Contradiction; but

but was brought about, *velut conspiratione facta* as *Blondell* expresses it. But he who can believe that in a Church of such great *Extent*, an *universal Change*, in a matter of such great moment could in *very few Years* be *fully accomplished*, without the least *Opposition*, even from such Men of the *strictest Piety*, and most *tenacious* of the *Customs*; must have *Credulity*, I think, enough to receive all the *Fables* of the *Legend* for true *History*, and to swallow all the *Absurdities* even of *Transubstantiation* it self.

For a farther Confirmation of this Second Conclusion, we have many Instances of single Persons (some mentioned in Holy Scripture and others transmitted to us by the best Antiquity :) Of single Persons, I say, who by the Apostles themselves were appointed to preside and govern in the several Churches that had been planted by them. For this End was *Timothy* placed at *Ephesus* (as I have already said) and *Titus* at *Crete* (*Tit.* 1. 5.) And what were the *Angels* (or *Messengers*, for so the word may be rendered) of the *Seven Churches* (*Rev.* 1. 20.) but single Persons severally presiding and governing in them? *St. Paul* tells us, That from *Jerusalem* round about unto *Illyrium*, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ: A vast Circuit; of no less than fifteen hundred Miles, without accounting any thing for the Breadth of it, which in some places was very great. Now it was morally impossible that the Apostle himself could be at hand, at once to manage, and give particular Directions in all the Ecclesiastical and Spiritual Affairs of this vast, and at that time, very populous, Tract of Ground: Since then it is allowed on all Hands, that he left *Timothy* at *Ephesus* and *Titus* at *Crete*, to perform the Office

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Government, in those Churches, which he himself could not attend unto; and since the Reason of the thing is altogether the same; can there be the least doubt made, but that he and the rest of the Apostles followed the same Rule in all the like Cases? Especially if we consider, that the very Names of many of these first Church Governours, under the Title of *Bishops*, are recorded in the most Authentick

Writings of the Ancients; as *Diogenes* the *Areopagite* at *Athens*; *Cyprian* or *Gains*, at *Thessalonica*; *Nicopolis* at *Colosse*, (Col. 4. 17.) *Timothy* at *Philippi*; *Crescens* at *Galatia* or *Gallia*; *Evodius*, and soon after him *Ignatius*, at *Anti-*

See a Catalogue of these first Bishops collected by Bishop Taylor, Episc. Assert. Sect. 13,---18.

ochia; with divers others who are so well known that I need not stand to recount them. And thus I have done with the first Question, which solely concerns the *Matter of Fact*. I proceed now to the

Second Question, which is concerning the *Matter of Right*, that is to say, *how far it may be concluded, from this Fact, or any other way, that sort of Church Polity ought for ever to be retained among Christians.*

The only way to try any *matter of Right*, is to examine it by these never-failing *Rules*, which, by the Allowance of all reasonable Men, ought always to take place in such Cases. And Two of these Rules there seem to be, either of which, by itself, and much more both together, will be sufficient to bring this last part of the Controversie to a very fair Determination.

The first Rule is, that *an Apostolick Practice*, universally received by the Christian Church, and, in itself altogether unblameable, ought not for ever, with-

out some absolute necessity, to be laid aside, and mu-
 less to be abolished among Christians. What may
 be done, in cases of extreme necessity, I do not
 now enquire : and if any thing, that was insti-
 tuted or practised by the Apostles, comes in pro-
 cess of time to be abused or perverted, no Man
 doubts, but that it ought to be reformed and
 rectified, and brought back again to its primitive
 Design and Intention. But where it plainly
 enough appears that the Practice is purely Aposto-
 lick, that the Church has universally complied with
 it ; and that no just fault can be found with the
 thing itself ; such a Practice as this, sure, ought
 never, by us Christians, to be receded from ;
 least, except we should be thereunto compelled
 by some very cogent and unavoidable necessity.
 The reason of this Rule is very plain. For the
 Apostles having received their Authority and
 Commission immediately from Christ ; and al-
 being assisted by Divine Inspiration in the execu-
 tion of that Trust which was reposed in them
 whatsoever they all agreed universally to estab-
 lish, it is not to be doubted but they did it by
 the direction of the Holy Spirit of God. And
 what we find to be thus established, it cannot
 be safe, or indeed lawful for us, of our own ac-
 cord, to alter or abolish : However the Exigence
 of Circumstances may possibly, in some cases
 excuse us for complying with what we are not
 way able to help or hinder.

To illustrate this Rule by an Example : There
 is no express Command of Christ, that appears
 for conferring of Holy Orders by the Imposition
 of Hands. We read indeed that Jacob laid his
 Hands on Ephraim and Manasseh when he bless-
 ed them, (Gen. 48. 14.) that Moses did the like
 to Joshua, and that by God's command, when
 he

appointed him his Successor, (Num. 27. 18. 23.) and that our Saviour put his Hands upon and blessed the little Children that were brought unto him, (Mark 10. 16.) But for imposition of Hands, or conferring of Holy Orders, we have neither any immediate Command of Christ, that appears, nor so much as his Example. For it was by breathing, (Joh. 20. 22.) and not by laying hands upon the Apostles, that he gave them the Holy Ghost, together with a Commission for the performance of their Sacred Office; and yet that was the constant practice of the Apostles, and of the Church universal after them, in this manner, and with the use of this visible Sign, or Rite, always to set Men apart for any of the sacred Functions of the Ministry, so generally allowed, and so very evident both from Scripture and Antiquity, that I need not spend time in the proving of it. Now hear the remarkable and yet very reasonable words of Calvin

See Dr. Comber
of the Ordination
of Deacons, Ch. 4.
Calv. Inst. L. 4.
cap. 3. §. 16.

upon this Occasion. *Licet autem* (says he) *nulum extet certum præceptum de manuum impositione, quia tamen fuisse in perpetuo usu Apostolis videmus, illa tam accurata eorum observatio præcepti vice nobis esse debet.* Altho' therefore there were no other certain Command (either express or implicit) for Episcopacy; yet since this Form of Church Government was in perpetual use with the Apostles (as abundantly, I think, appears from what I have but now discoursed on the Question of Fact) this accurate observance of theirs (which only, and nothing less could be the Reason of so universal a Reception of Episcopacy, in so short time, throughout the Christian Church) ought to have the force of a Command, or Law with us; we will admit this Rule of Calvin's (as I think

we ought) to take place in the one Case as well as the other.

The Second *Rule of Right*, which, I think will go a little farther towards the ending of this Dispute, is this: That *the positive Laws and Institutions of our Saviour Jesus Christ are always to be interpreted according to the universal and received Practice of the Apostles*. Nor is this any more than what for ever takes place in all Kingdoms, Commonwealths, and Communities throughout the World. Let us suppose (for Example) that a Case arises upon a Statute of the Land (as many needs must) that the *express Letter of the Law* does not reach to, and therefore, alone, cannot determine: If in such a case as this, it sufficiently appears, that, immediately from and after the making of that Law, the *universal and allowed Practice*, and that *in pursuance of the Law itself*, has constantly been in such a certain manner; this *same Practice* shall be reckoned as an Authentick Interpretation, or rather as a *part*, of the Law, and equally obligatory with the *Letter* of it. And this with all the reason that may be: For whenever a Law is made, (especially by a Legislator that is wise and good) it is always to be supposed that they with whom the execution of this Law is first entrusted (and who therefore are to be an Example to those that are to come after) have sufficient Instruction and Information given them concerning the full Import and Design of what is enacted; and if they in any thing, relating to that Law, should act otherwise than was intended by the Law itself; it is not to be imagined but the Lawmaker would immediately interpose, and not suffer his Intention, in making the Law, to be from the very beginning so abused or perverted. Thus, I say, the Matter stands with relation to all worldly Communities; and that the same Rule will

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even much more strongly hold in the Christian Church, will, I think, easily be granted, if we consider, that the Apostles not only were, as Judges and Magistrates in a Civil State, entrusted with the Execution of the Laws and Institutions of our Blessed Saviour; but also had hereunto such constant, certain, and even infallible Assistance from the Holy Ghost (who guided them into all Truth, (John 16. 13.) taught them all things, and brought all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Christ had said unto them (ch. 4. 26.) as put them beyond all Possibility of Error; to which even the best Magistrates, and most learned Judges, in worldly Communities, are often subject.

But an Instance or two will more fully shew both the Usefulness, and Necessity of this Rule; which in itself, from what I have already said, appears to be so highly reasonable.

For Example, The giving of the Ten Commandments, by God or *Moses*, to the People of Israel, does not make them, any more than the rest of the Jewish Law, to become obligatory to Christians: But, besides the Obligation which our Reason assures us, the Moral Part of that Law for ever lays upon all Men; our Blessed Saviour (as I have already said) has given a new sanction unto the Decalogue, and thereby made it a part of the Law of his Church. *If thou wilt enter into Life (says he) keep the Commandments (Matth. 19. 17)* And when the Question was thereupon asked him, which, or what Commandments they were that he meant; he gives Instances in several of the Ten Commandments, (ch. 18. 19.) and in none other but them; thereby sufficiently shewing that it was the two Tables of the Law that he pointed at. Here then we have a Ratification of the Fourth Commandment as well as of the other Nine; for none of them

are excepted) and that by *Christ* himself. Now thus far (and no farther) the very *Letter* of that Commandment plainly goes, namely, that one Day in seven should, more particularly, be sanctified, and set apart from the Business of the World, for the Service of God, and Performance of Religious Duties : But if the Question be put, which of the seven Days is thus to be sanctified and set apart ? I desire to know how this matter shall be determined. You cannot say, it is the *Jewish Sabbath* ; for that is expressly ranked, by *St. Paul*, with *Meat* and *Drink*, the *New Moon*, and the *Jewish Holy-days* ; all which are by him equally called, *A Shadow of Things to come*, (Col. 2. 17) and thereby signified to be equally abolished, and no Man to be judged on account of any of them (v. 16.) Is every Man therefore, or every Church, at liberty, which of the seven Days to pitch upon, to be observed in pursuance of the Fourth Commandment ? The Consequence of this would be strange Confusion ; and a Man by travelling from one place to another, might become obliged to keep two or three Days in one Week. What Rule then must we go by, for the orderly and necessary Determination of a thing of this

See *Joh.* 20. 19, 26.
Act. 20. 7. *1 Cor.* 16.
2. καὶ τῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ λε-
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των καὶ πόλεις ἡ ἀ-
γρῆς μερόνων ἐπὶ τὸ
αὐτὸ συνέλδουσιν γί-
νεται, &c. *Just. Mar.*
Apol. 2. *vid. Joh.*
Forbes. Theol. Mo-
ral. Lib. 4. *Cap.* 2.

First day of the Week, should always, in a more especial manner than the other Days of

Consequence ? For my part I can find no other but this, that it was the *Practice* of the *Apostles*, and from them derived to the Universal Church, that the Day called by the Gentiles *Sunday* and by Christians the *Lords-day*, (Rev. 1. 10.) being the seventh from the Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour, and by the Jews reckoned as the

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the Week, be appointed for the Performance of Religious Offices; and in pursuance of this *Practice*, without any other express Law, that appears, the Christian Church has all along hitherto thought herself bound to determine the Obligation of the Fourth Commandment to this particular Day, and not to any of the other Six.

The Rule I am upon is of great Importance, and therefore for the farther Illustration of it, take, I pray, another Instance.

It is a Law and Institution of our Blessed Saviour, that *Bread* should be eaten and a *Cup* drank in remembrance of his Death and Passion, (*Matth.* 26. 26, &c.) and as the *Communion of his Body and Blood*, (1 Cor. 10. 16.) Now let the Question be, who have a Right, or are under an Obligation, to eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup? You can never determine this by the *Letter* of the Law itself. For when our Blessed Saviour first instituted and administered this holy Ordinance, there were none present with him but only his Apostles; and to them alone was his Command *expressly* directed. The utmost, then, that from the Words themselves you can infer, is, That the Apostles, or perhaps all those that succeed them in their Office, had hereby an Obligation laid upon, and a Right given to them, to partake of this Bread and of this Cup. But what is this to the Laity? Or what is it to Women? Who yet have always been judged to have the same Right, and to be under the same Obligation. You will say, perhaps, that if not from these, yet from other Words of our Blessed Saviour, this *Obligation*, and consequently the *Right*, appears to be Universal, and therefore must include the Laity, and even Women, as well as the Apostles or Clergy. For, says *Christ* himself, (*John* 6. 53.) *Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, ye have no life in*

you. But, if you will go no farther than the *express meaning* of Christ's Words will lead you, plain it is, that by *eating* and *drinking*, here, he means neither more nor less but only *believing*. *I am the Bread of Life* (says he) *he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst*: (v. 35.) It is by *coming* to Christ then, and *believing* on him (which are only two Words for the same thing) that we satisfy our Spiritual *Hunger* and *Thirst*, which he calls by the Names of *Eating* and *Drinking*: And *Eternal Life*, which (v. 53, 54) is expressly annexed to this same *eating* and *drinking*, is a little before as expressly joined to *believing*. He that *believeth on me hath everlasting Life*: (v. 47.) It must be granted indeed, that eating of that Bread, and drinking of that Cup, which he has appointed in Remembrance of his Death and Passion, is one way (tho' not the only one) of signifying and outwardly expressing our Belief on him: But still the Question is (since the *bare words* of Christ do no where, either expressly or by consequence, suggest or signify so much to us;) How shall it be sufficiently proved that Laymen and Women have a Right, or are under any Obligation, in this particular manner to express or signify such their Belief, as well as those who are called to the Ministry? Why, plain it is, that the *Practice of the Apostles*, by them everywhere introduced and established in the Church, that all faithful Christians should *eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup*, (1 Cor. 11. 28.) this *Practice*, I say, and nothing else, that to us appears, has interpreted the Command of our Blessed Saviour, to extend to the former as well as to the latter. And in pursuance of this it is, that all Christians, Laity as well as Clergy, and Women as well as Men, have ever been accounted equally to have a Right, and to be under one and the

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the same Obligation to participate of, and communicate in this Sacred Institution.

Let us now apply this Rule, thus exemplified, to the case in hand. Our Blessed Saviour (amongst other things) institutes and appoints, as I have already said, that the Gospel shall be authoritatively preached, Baptism and the Lord's-Supper be administered, the Power of the Keys exercised, Sins be remitted or retained, and all the proper Offices relating to Religion be performed. Now the Question is, who they are that shall always have Power regularly to perform these Offices, of preaching, baptizing, and the rest of them, whatever they are or may be? May every Christian then indifferently take these things upon him? Or may every Church establish what Polity, or Form of Government they please? This would soon run all into Confusion: And therefore it cannot be supposed that God, who does all things with Order and Regularity, would ever leave his Church in so distracted a Condition. To what then must we have recourse for our certain and authentick Direction in this case? Why, to the very same Rule that we find has determined the two cases that we have but now had under our consideration; I mean *the Practice of the Apostles universally transmitted to the Christian Church*. Our Blessed Saviour, by ratifying the Fourth Commandment, has expressly appointed that one Day in seven should in a more especial manner than the other six, be kept holy: He has also ordained that Bread should be eaten, and a Cup drank as a Memorial of his Sufferings, and as the Communion of his Body and Blood: And lastly he has instituted certain Offices, as Preaching, Baptizing, with the other Parts of the Ministerial Function; to be for ever performed in his Church. Now as in the two former Instances,

the *Practice of the Apostles universally received* is a sufficient Rule, (nor have we any other) to fix and determine which of the seven Days shall be observed, and to what Persons the Right and Obligation, to eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup, shall extend; so in this last Case, since *in fact* it evidently appears that for the Performance of all these Offices, the Apostles throughout the Universal Church, did every where establish *Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons*, with a different extent of Power unto each of them, (for the doing of which I suppose no Christian will deny that they had sufficient Authority from him that sent them, as I have already said) What imaginable Reason can be given why this Establishment of theirs should not, as well as the other two, for ever take place and have the force of a Law? Or what other certain Rule have we to preserve the Ministerial Office from the bold Intrusion of every unqualified Man, that, without any other Commission, than his own Opinion of his proper Gifts, may, at any time have a mind to thrust himself into it?

And thus I have done with the second Question, which was of *Right*; and have endeavoured, from two very plain Rules (which in other cases are, without contradiction to take place) to shew who we are to understand by the *Elders that are to rule in the Church*, or in other Terms, *what sort of Church Polity ought for ever to be retained amongst Christians*.

But before I dismiss this Subject, it will be necessary to give some Answer to two or three Objections that are commonly made against what I have now been endeavouring to prove.

First, Then, it is objected that the Office of *Timothy, Titus* (and others, who in the Apostle's Time, had the like Charge) was not standing and perpetual; or for ever to be continued in the

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the Church; but only temporary, and for the present Occasion: They were *Evangelists* (2 Tim. 4. 5.) say our *Adversaries*, and not *Bishops* as we understand the word.

But why a Man's being an *Evangelist* (that is to say a Teacher and a Preacher of the Gospel) should make him ever the less a *Bishop*, I confess, I cannot imagine. And how do they prove that the Office of *Timothy* in *Ephesus*, *Titus* in *Crete*, or any other of the Persons, but now named, in the several Churches committed to their Care; was only temporary and occasional? Does the holy Scripture say so? Not at all: Do the Writings of the Ancient Fathers suggest any such thing? Altogether the contrary. It is therefore *gratis dictum*, spoken without proof, and for that reason may be *gratis negatum*, and needs no refutation.

Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 4. & alibi.

But besides the general Current of Antiquity, which has all along reckoned *Timothy* and *Titus*, with the rest of those that were in the like Station, to be *Bishops*, in the very same Sense as we now understand the word; it seems to be one Mark of a standing and perpetual Office in the Church, that it was to continue even after the Death of the Apostles: And that this was the Case of *Timothy* (and by Parity of Reason, of the others also) is plain from St. *Paul's* second Epistle to him, (in which it is that he is styled an *Evangelist*) for there we find the Apostle giving him an Account of his approaching Martyrdom, that he was ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand (c. 4. v. 6.) warning him of that Perverseness which would appear in Men in the time to come (v. 3.) and using this as an Argument to stir him up to Watchfulness and Diligence in the Discharge of that Office which he had committed to him. *Watch thou in all*

things, endure Afflictions, do the Work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy Ministry (v. 5.)

Secondly, They who find that they are not able to give a direct Answer to the Arguments produced by us in this Controversie, do yet think that they sufficiently evade the Force of them by telling us that the Primitive Bishoprick were but of very small Extent; and therefore can be no just Foundation for our *Diocesan Episcopacy*.

But this seems to be little better than trifling; for tho' one Man may be a Giant, and another a Dwarf, yet are they both equally *Men*, if they alike partake of humane Nature; tho' one may be a King of a small Territory, and another of a very large Dominion; yet are they equally *Kings*, if their Office and Power, in their several Kingdoms be one and the same. And, in like manner, tho' one Bishop may have a very large Diocess, and another a very small one; yet still as to their Office and Power, within their several Charges (and much more within the Catholick Church at large) they both may be equally *Bishops*. The true and adequate Notion of a *Bishop* consists in having such a certain Measure of lawful Power to preside and govern in Ecclesiastical Matters among and above the *Presbyters, Deacons, and People*, as I have already said; however the Limitation of the Exercise of that Power, in each Bishop, to a certain District or Diocess, beyond which, except in Cases of great Necessity, he ought not to go, may be matter of Ecclesiastical Institution, and Agreement only; and accordingly so settled for the better carrying on the Work of the Gospel, and the more regular Preservation of the Frame and Order of the Christian Church: As James, Cephas and John gave to Paul and Barnabas the Right hand of Fellowship, that these should go unto the
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Heathen, and they unto the Circumcision (Gal. 2. 9.) and Labourers, that have a very great Harvest to take care of, do divide and distribute the Work among themselves, in order to the better performance of it : Except therefore the Objectors can prove that the Primitive Bishops were not allowed to exercise such a Power as this in their several Churches ; the greatness or smallness of their Diocesses, with respect to those of our present Bishops, will make nothing at all to their purpose. And yet as far as at this distance we are able to trace the State and Condition of the Ancient Bishopricks, there are none of them to be found, where Christianity came to be any thing well planted, but what contained many more Christians, than what could assemble in one Congregation for Divine Worship ; and had each of them several Presbyters under one Bishop, for the ordinary and better performance of Sacred Offices ; which plainly shews that in those early times Episcopacy was the same for substance with what we now plead for, as of Divine Apostolick Institution, whatever accidental or circumstantial Difference there may be between those Ancient Bishops and ours. But

Thirdly, The great Objection, and which in the Opinion of some, seems to press most hard upon us, is, that if Episcopacy, as we state it, is, whether expressly, or by just Consequence, of Divine Institution ; it will follow, that those Churches, or pretended Churches, which have no Bishops, have no regular, that is to say, no Ordination ; and if no Ordination, then no Valid, that is to say, no Sacraments ; and if no Sacraments, then can they be no Churches ; which is hard to say of so many learned, pious and orthodox Societies of Christians, which have embraced the Reformation without retaining the Episcopal Government

vernment amongst them; to which Allegation because it seems to derive the greatest Prejudice of any upon our Doctrine, I crave your patience while I return a full and distinct Answer.

First then, *Where a Truth is well and sufficiently proved, it ought to be no manner of prejudice to it, that never so many Men, in all other respects Learned, Pious and Orthodox do reject and deny it.* For Truth is never the less Truth, nor Proof ever the less Proof, tho' many Men, otherwise of never so good a Character, do refuse to admit it. For Example; there is no Truth, I think, better confirmed, both by Scripture and Antiquity, than this, That they who have a Right and are under an Obligation, to eat of the Bread are also under the same Obligation, and have

the very same Right to drink of the Cup in the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Now be

cause the Church of *Rome* (in which there certainly are many Pious and Learned Men; and Orthodox also in the Fundamentals of Christianity, whatever Errors or Corruptions they have mixed therewith) because, I say, the Church of *Rome*, who have in some measure, departed from the first Institution of this holy Ordinance do, with one voice, reject this Doctrine, which we maintain; is this a just ground for any of us in the least to doubt of it? In like manner If the Proof which we bring of the *Fact*, that Episcopacy was the Government actually settled by the Apostles throughout the Universal Church be lame and insufficient; or the *Consequence* which we draw from thence touching the *Obligation* that lies upon all Churches to retain and keep up the same Government, does not fairly follow; let these things or either of them, be fully and fairly shewn, and it will be home to the purpose: But if the *Fact* (as I have said) be

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so notorious as to be given up by the most Learned even of our Adversaries, and the *Consequence* none other than what, in other Cases (as I think I have shewn) all Christians do freely admit; and that with the greatest reason that may be: Shall this be look'd upon as a just Objection, against what we so substantially prove, that they, who have so far at least declined from the Primitive Practice, will not allow of the necessity or validity of those Rules upon which this Practice was established, and therefore (as we say) ought to be continued? In a word, whatever *Prejudice* the Practice of some of the Foreign Reformed Churches may seem in the Opinion of any, to derive upon our Doctrine touching the Divine Institution of Episcopacy; it cannot, by the allowed Rules of reasoning, be reckoned as a fair *Objection* against it. But even this *Prejudice* itself will be very much lessened; if as a farther Answer we consider,

Secondly, That they who bring this as an Objection against us, do draw a Consequence from our Doctrine which we are not obliged to maintain.

In the behalf of those Churches who have reformed, without Episcopacy, it may be urged, That from a defect in the Authority or Commission of him who performs a Ministerial Office, we cannot infer a nullity in the performance itself, with respect to the Persons, who are to receive the benefit of it. For Instance; at the time when our Blessed Saviour was upon Earth, as there were divers other great Defects and Irregularities in the Jewish Church; so in particular, the High-Priesthood, which was an Office of God's own Institution, and to continue for Life; by the Power of the Romans, that then prevailed, was made Temporary if not Annual, and at pleasure transferred from one Person to another. Thus we read of

Caiaphas,

Caiaphas, that he was the High-Priest that same Year, (Joh. 18. 13.) Now if from this Illegality in the Commission and Appointment of the High Priest an absolute Nullity in the Priesthood itself or all its Performances did necessarily follow, it is not to be imagined, but that our Saviour wou'd plainly have charged them with downright *Apostacy*, and absolutely refused to communicate in any Divine Offices with them? Neither of which we find to have been done by him.

Again: They who are the strictest in defence of the Divine Right of Episcopacy; as with great strength of Argument, they prove that, ordinarily, and regularly, no Man has a sufficient Power to confer Baptism, but he who has received his Ordination from a Bishop; so if any Person who has been Baptised by one ordained by Presbyters alone, desires to be received into Communion with them; they do not require that he should be again baptized; which yet they ought to do, if their Judgment were, that a defect in the Authority or Commission of the Person administering, did infer no less than a Nullity in the Office performed by him. There are di-

Ec. Pol. l. 5. Sect.
62.

vers things (as Judicious *Hooker* suggests) that ought not, perhaps, to be done, in the manner that they are, which yet, being done may have their due force and effect. Nor does the Validity of a Religious Performance wholly depend upon the Authority or Qualifications of the Person performing, but altogether upon the acceptance of Almighty God: And where Men act, *bonâ fide*, to the best of their knowledge, or as well as the unavoidable necessity of their Circumstances will permit (which is always to be presumed, except the contrary very plainly appears) may we not charitably hope, that a good and gracious God will accept and ratifie what they so do, notwithstanding

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standing that, for want of due Information, Knowledge or Ability, they differ from the positive Rules that are instituted, or prescribed in such Cases? If then for these or any other reasons we do not pronounce an absolute Nullity upon that Baptism which is conferred by a Person, who regularly, has not a sufficient Commission to administer the same; what Obligation can lie upon us to affirm those Holy Orders to be altogether void, (I mean as to the effect of the Ministerial Function) which are conferred by Presbyters alone, who, according to what was instituted and settled by the Apostles, are not, without the concurrence of a Bishop, entrusted with the Power of Ordination? Irregularities certainly ought to be rectified, and Defects supplied, as soon as they are discovered; but from an Irregularity or Defect, to infer an absolute Nullity is not only a thing without Reason, but also may, perhaps, draw such Consequences after it, as may lead us into great Perplexity and Confusion.

Now when these, or such Pleas as these, are brought in behalf of the Foreign reformed Churches, it is none of our Business either to re-ate them, or to pass our Judgment or Verdict upon them †. *To their own Master they must stand*

† Note, that in what I have here said, I follow the Opinion of the late Learned Lord Primate Bramhall; who in his Letters of Orders given to a Reverend Divine, who having formerly received Orders in the Presbyterian way, was afterwards re-ordained by his Grace; caused the following words to be inserted. *Non annihilantes priores ordines (si quos habuit) nec invaliditatem aut invaliditatem eorumdem determinantes; multo minus ordines Sacros Ecclesiarum forinsecarum condemnantes; quos proprio Judici relinquimus: Sed solummodo supplentes quicquid prius defuit per Canones Ecclesie Anglicanae requisitum, & providentes Ecclesie, ut Schismatis tollatur occasio, & conscientie fidelium liberet, * nec [ne] ullo modo dubitent de ejus ordinatione, aut actus Presbyteriales tanquam invalidos avertentur.* See the Life of the Lord primate Bramhall, prefixed to his Works by the most Reverend, John late Lord Bishop of Limerick, and now Archbishop of Tuam.

or fall (Rom. 14. 4.) To him therefore we ought to leave them, who one Day will judge them with Mercy as well as Justice; and will, we hope make a full Allowance for all such Mistake and invincible Prejudices, as even the best and most learned of Men are sometimes subject to.

I have now done with the two first Observations drawn from my Text, there remain yet two more to be handled: Concerning which because neither will the time now allow me to enlarge upon them, nor am I willing wholly to pass them by; I shall content my self with giving you brief hints of what may be said upon them rather than undertake, at the latter End of my Discourse fully to speak to them.

III. The third Observation then was this, that *such Elders* (Bishops, I think, I may now take leave to call them) *as do well acquit themselves of the Office of Government, ought justly to meet with very great Honour and Esteem in the Church even double Honour*, as my Text expresses it.

What St. Paul means by *ruling well*, we may best learn from other Passages of his own Writings; to which if we have recourse we shall find that, in this expression, he designs to include, at least, these two things, first *Diligence* and secondly *Impartiality*.

Touching the former of these, they are his own words, that *he that ruleth should do it with diligence* (Rom. 12. 8.) And to this purpose, he gives *Timothy* a short Exhortation indeed, but very pressing and earnest one: *Meditate on these things* (says he) *give thy self wholly to them* (1 Tim. 4. 15.) as if he had said unto him. Do not think that you are now put into a Post of Ease; on the contrary, the Office that you are entrusted with, is a place of great Care, and consequently, of Labour and Trouble: If you conscientiously discharge your Duty, you will soon find that

that it requires your constant and utmost Thought and Application of Mind : I therefore give you warning before-hand that you *meditate* constantly upon these things, have them daily and hourly in your remembrance ; consider that by your having undertaken them, they are now become the chief Business of your Life ; from which therefore, neither the Cares nor Affairs of the World, or any other thing ought to take you off, or divert you. And to say all at once, I tell you they are things of such a Nature and Consequence, as that you ought to give your self wholly and altogether to them.

Then as touching the other thing implied, I mean *Impartiality* : I need go no farther than the solemn Admonition that again he gives him in the following words (1 Tim. 5. 21, 22.) *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens sins ; keep thy self pure.* There is a force in some of the Original Words, that cannot well be expressed by a bare Translation, without a Paraphrase ; *καὶ οὐκ ἐκ προλήψεως* without prejudice : *μηδὲν ποιῶν ἐκ προτάλεισιν* doing nothing out of inclination : As if in other Terms he had said, O Timothy, there are divers things that, if care be not taken, will be very apt to beget, on many Occasions, a *Prejudice* in a Man of your station ; to prepossess him in favour of one before another, and incline him sometimes to oppose even the good of Souls, and the Interest of Religion, to that regard he, perhaps, may have to the *Person* of this or that Man : Such an influence as this (for instance) ancient Friendship or Acquaintance, Kindred or Relation, or the Intercession of one whom he is willing to oblige, may have upon him : And often we find that

that a Man has even an unaccountable Inclination to the Person of one rather than another without any impartial Respect had to their Merits. Here therefore I think it necessary to redouble my Charge and Admonition to thee : *I charge thee therefore before God*, who is the searcher of all Hearts ; *before the Lord Jesus Christ*, who shall one Day be thy Judge ; and before *the Elect Angels*, who then shall be Witnesses of thy Acquittal or Condemnation, *that thou carefully observe these things* that I have now directed thee, and that without prejudice or prepossession, *not preferring one man before another* for any other Reason but his true and real Merit ; doing *nothing by partiality*, nor suffering any Inclination, whatsoever, to prevail with thee, in the least, to the Detriment of the Church, or our holy Religion. And, upon this occasion, in a particular manner, I charge thee to *lay hands suddenly on no man* : Admit no one to the Office of the Ministry, until thou hast made a strict Enquiry, and art thoroughly satisfied, both as to his true Piety and sufficient Abilities for the Discharge of that Function : *Keep thy self pure, be not partaker of other mens sins* : For know well, that if, for want of due care thou committest the Charge of those Souls for whom *Christ* died, to one that is not qualified for it ; his Faults or Neglects will be put to thy Account. *Si vitiosum* (he might also have added *imperitum*) *admiseris imputabuntur tibi ejus peccata* ; as *Castalio* remarks upon that Place.

Thus we see what *St. Paul* means by ruling well, and what that *double Honour* is, which a Bishop, who thus diligently and impartially governs that part of the Church committed to him ought always to meet with : As namely, first a great Respect and Esteem of his Person, and secondly a liberal Maintenance in proportion to

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this Station, might plainly enough be shewn from the Context, but that the Time will not now allow me farther to enlarge.

From the Apostles words also in another place, his Reasons might be drawn why he would have this double Honour given to every such Bishop. *We beseech you, Brethren, (says he) to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Works sake, (1 Theff. 5. 12, 13.)* To govern the Church well, to keep every Man, as much as may be, to his Duty, to preserve Order and Discipline, suppress Vice and encourage Piety, is a most excellent Work, advances the Glory of God, and tends to the Salvation of Man. They therefore who well perform this Office, do, *for their Works sake*, deserve all the Honour and Respect that we can pay them. But, besides this, it is a Work that requires Labour and Care, great Thought, and constant Application; and if the bare Goodness of the Work, justly deserves honour, the laboriousness of it may well be accounted worthy of double honour. But I must not longer dwell on these Points: A word or two, and that very briefly of the last Observation, and I have done. It was this,

IV. That it ought to be no small Addition to the Honour and Esteem of such an Elder, as my Text also speaks of, if besides the faithful Administration of his Government, he also labours in the Word and Doctrine.

There are two ways of labouring in the Word and Doctrine: First, by preaching the Gospel in each man's own Person. Thus St. Paul directs Timothy: *I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, — Preach the word, be instant, in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine (2 Tim. 4. 1, 2.)*

1, 2.) And, Secondly, by taking all possible Care to provide faithful and able Teachers and Preachers for the Instruction of the People. This Charge also the Apostle gives to *Timothy*. *The things that thou hast heard of me* (says he) *among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also* (2 Tim. 2. 2.) And not only that Bishop who by often appearing himself in the Pulpit, sheweth a good Example to his Presbyters, and shames such as neglect this part of their Duty: But also, who makes a sufficient Trial of every man's Abilities before he admits him into holy Orders or the Cure of Souls; enquires carefully into the performance of the Several Preachers that are under his Inspection or Government; directs them how and after what manner they should *rightly divide the Word of Truth* (2 Tim. 2. 15) countenances and encourages those who do this well, and gently admonishes all such as he finds guilty of Negligence or imprudent Affectation in this part of their Office: Such a Bishop as this, I say, as well as the other, does truly and to very excellent purpose, *labour in the Word and Doctrine*.

And that such Labour as this ought very much to augment the Honour and Esteem of every Bishop who is diligent in it, might fully be proved by the very same Reasons, that we had but now from *St. Paul* upon the preceding Point. To labour either Way, and much more both Ways, in promoting of the Gospel, is a most excellent work; and highly tends to the honour of God, the good of the Church, and the salvation of Mankind: It is also a painful work and requires not a little Study and Diligence. And therefore upon both these Accounts, ought to meet with a most honourable return here, and

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shall certainly receive a most ample Reward
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But it is full time that I make an End : How-
ever before I have quite done, I cannot but take
this Occasion, both from what I have now been
discoursing, and also from the place where I am,
to beg and intreat all that hear me, this Day,
that when they address themselves unto the
Throne of Grace, they would often make it a
part of their Prayers to Almighty God, that
the Divine Institution of Episcopacy may be re-
stored and revived wherever it has been laid aside
in the Christian Church, reformed and rectified,
wherever it has been abused or perverted, and
continue for ever to flourish where it is rightly es-
tablished: That all Bishops may rule well, and la-
bour in the Word and Doctrine, and may never
fail to meet with that double Honour which is due
to them for so doing: That all Presbyters and
Deacons may industriously follow the good
example of their Bishops: That our Universi-
ties, the Seminaries of useful Knowledge, and
this in particular where we now are, may al-
ways prosper and be in great Credit: That Learn-
ing, in them, may be freed from all unnecessary
Clogs and Difficulties; and true Piety and Gra-
titude always grow up and thrive together with
it: That all Christian People may become obedi-
ent to the Laws of God, and conformable to
the wholesome and laudable Constitutions of the
Church: And *lastly*, that all of us, Bishops,
Presbyters, Deacons and People, may with such
Conscience and Diligence, perform our several
Duties, as that God may be glorified, his Church
always edified, and we our selves eternally
saved: All which, *God of his Mercy grant, for
the Merits, and through the Mediation of Jesus
Christ; to whom with the Father and the Holy
Ghost, Three Persons, but one incomprehensible God*
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and Essence, be ascribed all Honour, Glory, and Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

APPENDIX.

TO satisfy the Reader touching the Concessions made by those Learned Men whose Names I have mentioned; I here give him an Extract of Quotations from them, as they are set down in a late little Book entituled, *A true Churchman*, &c.

Petrus Molineus, in his Book *de Munere Pastoralis*, purposely written in defence of the Presbyterian Government, acknowledgeth, That presently after the Apostles times, or even in their times (as Ecclesiastical Story witnesseth) it was ordained, that, in every City one of the Presbytery should be called a Bishop; who should have Pre-eminence over his Colleagues, to avoid Confusion, which oft-times ariseth out of Equality; and truly this form of Government all Churches every where received.

Theodorus Beza, in his Tract, *de triplici Episcopatus genere*, confesseth in effect the same thing. For, having distinguished Episcopacy into three kinds, *Divine, Humane, and Satanical*; and attributing to the Second (which he calls *Humane*, but we maintain and conceive to be Apostolical) not only a Priority of Order, but a Superiority of Power and Authority over other Presbyters, bounded yet by Laws and Canons provided against Tyranny; he clearly professeth, that of this kind of Episcopacy, is to be understood whatsoever we read concerning the Authority of Bishops (or Presidents, as *Justin Martyr* calls them) in *Ignatius* and other more ancient Writers.

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Inaequalitatem (sc. inter Episcopos & Presbyteros) esse vetustissimam ac vicinam Apostolorum temporibus: Quod nos ultro fatemur. Dan. Chazier Panstrat. Tom. 2. lib. 10. cap. 6. § 24.

Jam tempore Ignatii erat discrimen illud Presbyterorum & Episcopi. Nic. Vedeli. exer. 3. in Epist. Ignat. ad Philadelph. cap. 14.

*Non ita multo post Apostolos, obtinuit consuetudo, ut ex multis pastoribus, seu Presbyteris & Episcopis, unus praeficeretur reliquis omnibus, non inquam Dominus, sed ut rector reliquis Senatoribus; cui imprimis commendata esset cura totius alicujus Ecclesiae; reliqui illius essent coadjutores & collegae. Ac proinde huic etiam primatui *κατ' ἐξοχήν* nomen Episcopi & Pastoris attribuebatur: Reliqui collegae Presbyterorum tantum nomine contenti fuerunt: ita factum fuit ut quaeque civitas unum haberet Episcopum & multos Presbyteros Hieron. Zan. quart. praecipit.*

Non Populum aggreditur, sed Clerum; nec quemlibet de clero nominatim compellat, sed Principem, utique Episcopum. Marlorat. in Apoc. cap. v. 1.

Cependant je demeure d'accord que l'ordre Episcopal est de grande Antiquité, & qu'il a esté reçu avec beaucoup de fruit par toute l'Eglise, bientôt après les Apôtres. Bochart Lettre à Monsieur Morin, pa. 4.

Blondell describes the Place and Office of the Senior Presbyter in every Church to have been much the same as we ascribe to a Bishop (*Praef. Apol. pro sentent. Hieron.*) calling them *Presbyterorum praepositos* *ἐξαρχούς*, *Cleri totius Capita*, *πρωτοκλήτους*, who had the first, or chief, care of each Church by the consent of their fellow Presbyters; and telling us, that the well or ill doing of the Flock committed to them, might justly be charged upon them. As he says it appears by the messages sent to the Angels of the Asiatick Church-

es, Rev. 2. 3. And having in these and other words described them as Persons of a remarkable Eminence above the rest of the Presbytery, he tells us (on what solid ground I cannot find) that this Office of course belonged to the eldest Presbyter in every Church, upon whose Death, he says, it was, by Succession, derived to the next in Seniority, and so continued until the Year of our Lord 108. (for the Case of *Timothy* and *Titus* he looks upon to be extraordinary) after which he has these remarkable words: *Sapaulo post—ad suffragia ubique (velut conspiratione factâ) itum, ut deinceps fratrum caput & ἀρχὴ ἑκαστοῦ ἐκκλησιᾶς, sed (ex recenti instituto) inter collegas dotibus ad communem ædificationem potior, &c. pag. 6, 7, 8.* So that *Blondell* himself, a professed Adversary, grants the Office of a Bishop to have been from the very first establishment of Churches; but only alledges (how truly I do not now enquire) that this Office at first went by Succession; and that soon after the Year 108, it came every where to be elective. And to make this Scheme of his out, he is forced to have recourse to a very extravagant Supposition, namely, that the Churches every where, on a sudden, as if they had conspired together, made a change in the manner of appointing their Bishops or Presidents, and brought it from Succession to Election. Altho' it is very evident that so material a change in a thing of that consequence could not be introduced without great Opposition, which therefore must have made it a Business of longer time than he supposes.

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Archbishop S Y N G E's

S E R M O N

Before the Honourable

House of Commons,

Preached at .

St. *Andrew's* Church, *DUBLIN*,

OCTOBER 23, 1711.

(Price 4*d.* or 1*l.* 5*s.* per Hundred.)



Mercurii, 24 Die Octobris, 1711.

ORdered, *Nemine contradicente*, That
Mr. Moore, and Mr. Oliver St.
George do give the Thanks of this House
to the Reverend Dr. Synge, for his Ex-
cellent and Seasonable Sermon preached
before this House Yesterday, at St. An-
drew's Church, and do desire him to
print the same.

Ex. per THO. TILSON,
Cler' Parl' Dom' Com'.

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*Thankfulness to Almighty God for his more antient
and later Mercies and Deliverances vouchsafed to
the British and Protestants within the Kingdom
of Ireland,*

Recommended and Press'd,

I N A

S E R M O N

Before the Honourable

House of Commons,

October the 23^d, 1711.

Preached at

St. Andrew's Church, DUBLIN.

By EDWARD SYNGE, D. D.

Late Lord Archbishop of TUAM.

And Publish'd by Order of the House.

*Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his
Benefits, Psal. ciii. 2.*

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for T. TRYE, near Gray's Inn-Gate in
Holborn, 1744.

[Price Four-pence.]



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J E R. xvi. 14, 15.

Therefore behold the Days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth that brought up the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt: But the Lord liveth that brought up the Children of Israel from the Land of the North, and from all the Lands whither he had driven them. —



I N this Chapter, GOD Almighty, by his Prophet, foretels the great and dreadful Calamities, which he had determined to bring even upon his own People, for their many and grievous Sins and Transgressions, whereby they had so highly provoked his Wrath and Indignation against them.

And among the many Evils that were to befall them, for their no less numerous Iniquities, the *Babylonish* Captivity, which soon after came upon them, is particularly mentioned as one. *Because*

A Sermon preached before the

your Fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, ver. 11. and ye have done worse than your Fathers; (for behold ye walk every one after the Imagination of his evil Heart, ver. 12.) Therefore will I cast you out of this Land, into a Land that ye know not, — where I will not shew you Favour, ver. 13.

But, in the midst of his most heavy and dreadful Judgments, GOD is not forgetful of his Mercy; and whilst he is denouncing (or, in this World, even inflicting) the greatest Punishments or Calamities on Sin, he still gives the Sinner such a Prospect of his relenting Goodness, as may encourage, and ought to *lead him* to Repentance.

And thus, upon this Occasion, he deals with the People of the *Jews*: At the same time when he sets before them the Evils he had determined against them; the miserable Death of many, *by the Sword and the Famine*, ver. 4. in their own Land, and the Slavery and Captivity of the Remainder in a *Land that they know not, neither their Fathers*: That they might not be altogether desperate, or look upon themselves, and their Posterity, as wholly forsaken, and cast off by GOD; he lets them know, in the Words of my Text, that he resolves yet to make a farther Trial of them: And after that he had *purged away their Dross, and taken away their Tin*, Isai. i. 25. by the fiery Furnace of Affliction, he would *bring them again*, in Peace and Quietness, into their own Country, *their Land that he had given unto their Fathers*, Jer. xvi. 15. And that this Deliverance of theirs should be so great, as even to outweigh that most memorable one of their Forefathers, from the *Egyptian* Bondage, he plainly signifies

signifies unto them in the Words of my Text,
Therefore behold the Days come, &c.

When GOD gave the Ten Commandments unto the People of *Israel*, from Mount *Sinai*, he introduces them with this remarkable Preface, *I am the LORD thy GOD, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage*, Exod. xx. 2.

From this, and other like Passages, in the Books of *Moses*, a Custom seems to have arisen among them, that, when they had occasion to mention the Name of GOD, they commonly at the same time expressed their Reverence and Gratitude towards him, by taking notice of that great and wonderful Deliverance, which he had vouchsafed unto their Forefathers: Particularly, whereas it was a Thing very usual among them, to confirm the solemn Promises which at any time they might make to one another, by an Oath; it seems to have become a common Form of Expression, whenever they thus swore, to say, *The LORD liveth*, or, *As the LORD liveth, that brought up the Children of Israel out of Egypt*.

Now it was not the Design of GOD, that this *Egyptian* Deliverance should ever be wholly forgotten by them: Only my Text lets them know, that their Deliverance from the *Babylonish* Captivity should be Matter of so great Joy unto them, that it might well give Occasion to make a very notable Change in that Form of Speech hitherto so much in use amongst them: And whereas for so long a time they had always
been

been accustomed to express their Thankfulness to GOD, by saying, *The LORD liveth, that brought up the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt*; they should chuse to do the same thing rather by saying, *The LORD liveth that brought up the Children of Israel from the Land of the North, and from all the Lands whither he had driven them.*

From the Words thus opened, we may draw these two Observations:

FIRST, That *antient Mercies or Deliverances, vouchsafed of old by GOD, to any Church or People, ought always to be remembered, with Thankfulness, by their Posterity.* It was not God's Design that the People of *Israel* should be unmindful of, or not thankful for, the Deliverance he had long before given to their Fathers out of the Land of *Egypt*.

SECONDLY, That *later Mercies and Deliverances ought always to be remembered with a greater Degree of Gratitude.* Altho' the Deliverance of the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt* was, in itself, both greater and more wonderful, by far, than that from the Captivity of *Babylon*, yet GOD himself foretels, and approves of it, that when the *LORD* should turn again the Captivity of *Zion*, Psalm cxxvi. 1, 2. and when, upon that Account, their Mouth should be filled with Laughter, and their Tongue with singing; they should express their Thankfulness to him after another manner, than what they had formerly used to do; *The LORD liveth, who brought up the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt*, should
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no longer be the common Phrase, but instead thereof, they should, with Joy and Thanksgiving, say, *The LORD liveth that brought up the Children of Israel from the Land of the North, and from all the Lands whither he had driven them.*

These two Observations, plain enough perhaps in themselves, and clearly, I think, deduced from the Text; I shall farther confirm by one or two Reasons of each of them; and then apply the whole to the Occasion of the present Solemnity.

For the better confirming, then, and at the same time clearing up the former of these Observations, I desire that these two Things may be considered.

FIRST, That where such Mercies or Deliverances have been granted, or bestowed by GOD, on any People or Church, the Benefits and Advantages thereof, if not forfeited by Sin and Wick- edness, do ordinarily descend, and continue to their Posterity, for many succeeding Generations. And,

SECONDLY, That such Deliverances and Mercies, are an *Earnest*, and, in some sort, an Engagement on GOD's Part, of farther Blessings to be conferred on the Posterity of those who receive them.

As to the first of these Things: Where any Nation, Society, or Person, enjoys any Benefit or Advantage derived down to them from any hand whatsoever; such Benefit, or Advantage, ought always to be considered, with a grateful Remembrance of the Person from whom it is so derived,

derived, tho' at never so great a Distance. This is a Truth universally acknowledged, and abundantly confirmed, by the Practice of all the civilized Part of Mankind, with whom it has been ever customary, by divers Ways and Methods, to preserve and keep up an honourable Memory, of the first Founders of, and great Benefactors to Kingdoms, Common-wealths, Cities, and Universities, and not only public Bodies Politic, but even private or particular Families: Of which the Instances are so numerous and well known, that I need not stand to recount them.

Now, as every good Thing originally comes to us from the Hand of GOD, who is the Fountain of all Blessings, through what Channels soever they may have their Passage; so when he is pleased to bestow any signal Favour upon a Church or People, or even a particular Person or Family, his Bounty is not so narrow, as to confine the Benefit of his Gift to the Persons that immediately receive it from him, but is ordinarily designed to extend itself down to their Posterity also, at least if they do not forfeit their Title thereto by their Sins and Transgressions.

It was a signal Favour (for Example) that GOD vouchsafed unto *Abraham*, in entering into a Covenant with him, and promising him the Land of *Canaan*, *Gen. xi. ver. 1.* Unto the Children of *Israel*, in bringing them forth from the Land of *Egypt*, into the Land of Promise, *Exod. iii. ver. 9.* Unto *Phineas*, in giving unto him the Covenant of an everlasting Priesthood, *Numb. xxv. ver. 13.* Unto *David*, in settling the Kingdom of *Israel* upon him, *1 Sam. xvi. ver. 13.* But
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manifest it is, that these several Blessings were not only designed as personal ones to them, upon whom they were at first conferred, but were also to descend to their Posterity as long as they should tread in the Steps, and follow diligently the good Example of their Fathers. *If thy Children will keep my Covenant and my Testimony that I shall teach them, their Children also shall sit upon thy Throne for evermore,* says GOD to David, Psal. cxxxii. 12.

And from his great Mercy and Loving-kindness, which is so amply set forth unto us throughout the Holy Scriptures, we may well conclude, the same to be always his Intent and Design; except for particular Reasons, unfathomable to us, he may sometimes see it proper to vary from the common Methods of his Providence: Nor can any thing, in fact, be more notorious than this, that the Blessings which GOD has bestowed both on particular Persons and public Societies, have, in very many Instances, descended also to their Posterity for many Generations, and sometimes Ages together.

Since then all Blessings and Benefits are originally derived from GOD himself, (a Doctrine which I need not stand now to prove, because no Man but an Atheist, or Epicurean, either does or ever did deny it) since whatever Favours GOD is pleased at any time to bestow, are generally, if not universally, designed for the Good of Posterity, as well as of those who first receive them: And, *lastly*, since, in fact, it is most manifest, that the good Effect of such Favours, Blessings, and Benefits, very often remains unto Posterity,
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in some measure more or less, for a Succession of many Years together; it follows, beyond Exception, that as long as any Church, or People, or even private Persons, reap any Advantage from any Favour or Blessing, vouchsafed by GOD unto their Forefathers, or such as have gone before them; so long, at least, they ought, with Thankfulness, to look back unto the Hand from whence such Advantage is derived to them. Even after their Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, the *Jews* ought not by any means to have forgotten that it was GOD who brought their Forefathers out of the Land of *Egypt*: And, upon all such Occasions whatever, *antient Mercies and Deliverances, vouchsafed of old by GOD to any Church or People, ought, in like manner, always to be remembered with Thankfulness by their Posterity*: Which was my first Observation.

But there is another Reason I told you, and which indeed goes something farther than the former, for the proving of the same Truth, and that is,

SECONDLY, That such Deliverances and Mercies of antient Date, are an *Earneſt*, and, in some sort, an *Engagement*, on GOD's Part, of farther Blessings to be conferred on the Posterity of those who receive them.

It will easily, I suppose, be granted by every one who has any just Sense of GOD and Religion, that whatsoever may, any way, entitle certain Men above others, to the Divine Favour or Protection, or give them any reasonable and proper Ground to expect and hope for any peculiar
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and particular Blessings from GOD, is a Thing in itself highly to be valued, and ought always to be remembered and thought of with great Thankfulness. And since the Mercies and Deliverances that GOD vouchsafes to any Church or People, are, as I have shewn, ordinarily by him designed for the Benefit not only of those who personally, at first, receive them, but also of their Posterity in succeeding Generations, except they by their Wickedness do wholly forfeit their Title to them; hence arises, in some sort, an *Engagement* upon him, in the ordinary course of his Providence, to go on with the Work which he has begun, and to continue his Favour and Goodness unto the Children, and Childrens Children, of those unto whom he has already shewn himself so gracious.

Thus, altho' the Children of *Israel* had, by rebelling against the Commandments of GOD, most justly forfeited and lost all the Title which they before had unto the Promises he had made them; yet still *Moses* pleads their Cause with him, tho' not upon their own Account, yet upon that of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, who had been so much beloved by him. *Remember*, says he, *thy Servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the Stubborness of this People, nor to their Wickedness, nor to their Sin, Deut. ix. 27.*

In like manner, the Prophet *Isaiab* even expostulates the Matter with GOD, and, as it were, puts him in Mind of the Mercies and Deliverances which formerly he had bestowed on his People, in order to obtain new ones for them. *Then he remembered the Days of old, Moses and*

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his People, saying, where is he that brought them out of the Sea — Isa. lxiii. 11. Look down from Heaven and behold, — Where is thy Zeal and thy Strength, the sounding of thy Bowels towards me: Are they restrained? ver. 15.

Nay, GOD himself makes use of the very same Argument, to convince the People of *Israel*, that if they would but be obedient to his Laws, they could have no Reason to doubt of his Kindness and Protection. *O my People, what have I done unto thee? — Testify against me, for I brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the House of Servants. O my People, remember now what Balak, King of Moab, consulted, and what Balaam, the Son of Beor, answered him, — that ye may know the Righteousness of the Lord, Micah vi. 5, &c.*

And since GOD has so solemnly declared that he will *shew Mercy unto Thousands of Generations, of them that love him, and keep his Commandments, Exod. xx. 6.* Wherever he has once begun, in any remarkable way, to shew such Mercy to any People; their Posterity may, with all Reason, look upon such Beginning, as a very good Sign of the Continuance of the same, if they perform the Condition of Love and Obedience, which, on their Part, he so expressly requires.

The Sum and Substance of this second Reason is this: Whatever may be looked on as a reasonable Assurance of the Continuance of GOD's Favour and Kindness, ought always to be most thankfully owned and remembered by them, to whom

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whom it is such an Assurance. But antient Mercies or Deliverances, vouchsafed by GOD to any Church or People, are, with all Reason, to be taken as such an Assurance to their Posterity, performing the Condition which he requires from them.

Therefore, such Mercies and Deliverances (at what Distance of Time soever they have been) ought always to be thankfully remembered by the Posterity of those who have received them. The Deliverance from *Egypt*, altho' above 960 Years, and consequently many Generations, before that from the *Babylonish* Captivity, yet was not, as I have shewn, even then, to be forgotten by the People of the *Jews*. And let thus much suffice to have been spoken on the first Observation. I proceed to the

SECOND, which is, That *later Mercies and Deliverances*, received from GOD, ought always to be remembered with a greater Degree of Gratitude. It shall no more be said, The LORD liveth that brought up the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt: But the LORD liveth that brought up the Children of Israel from the Lands whither he had driven them, says the Text.

This Observation will not take up much Time in the handling: And, for the better establishing of it, I offer these two Things to be considered.

FIRST, That every new Mercy and Deliverance, is a farther Confirmation and Instance of GOD's Love and Kindness to the Persons on whom they are bestowed. And,

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SECONDLY, That the Benefit of such Deliverances and Mercies, more immediately belongs to those who have a personal Share and Concern in them.

Touching the former of these Things, we may remark, that as every Blessing, which way soever derived unto us from Almighty GOD, requires, and calls for, a proportionable Degree of Thankfulness from him that receives it: So the more in Number of these Blessings any Man, or Society of Men, receives, the more his or their Thankfulness ought to increase and rise to a higher Degree. Not to love him, who has given sufficient Evidence of his Love to us, is Ingratitude, *Matth. v. 46.* And to love him but little, who has loved us very much, is not much better: Every Act of Kindness that GOD is pleased to do for any Church or People, is to be received as a Token of his Love towards them; and the more of these Acts he thinks fit to repeat or do, the greater still is the Evidence of his Love.

Put all this together, and the Consequence is plain; that as, by new and repeated Mercies and Deliverances, GOD vouchsafes, more and more, to shew his Love to any Church or People; the more still, in Proportion, their Love, and consequently their Gratitude, towards him ought to increase and rise.

From whence it follows, that, as *later Mercies and Deliverances* are added to those that have gone before, *they ought always to be remembered with a greater Degree of Thankfulness.*

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But to the same Purpose it may also be considered,

SECONDLY, That the Benefit of such Deliverances and Mercies, more immediately belongs to those who have a personal Share and Concern in them, which is another Reason why they ought to be remembered with a greater Degree of Gratitude.

The more moving and affecting a Kindness is, the more, in all Reason, our Thankfulness ought to be stirred up by it. If an Obligation has been laid upon my Ancestors, tho' many Generations off, yet, as long as the Benefit thereof redounds to me, I ought, by no means, to be insensible of it: But if such Obligation has been particular, and personal to myself, it is certain my Sense of it ought to be greater. As *Levi* is said to have payed Tithes in Abraham, *Heb. vii. ver. 9.* so he that has saved the Life of my Grandfather, may be said also, in him to have saved my Life: But if a Man has rescued me, in my own Person, from the Hand of a Murtherer, just ready to assault me; such an Obligation as this, being immediately and directly laid upon myself, most plainly calls for greater and warmer Acknowledgments.

By the Deliverance which GOD gave the *Israelites* out of the *Egyptian* Bondage, that People, for many Generations, came into the Enjoyment of a fruitful pleasant Land: And therefore, even in After-ages, as long as they continued there, they had great Reason, with Thankfulness, to say, *The LORD liveth that brought up the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt.*

But by that Deliverance, which the same GOD, some hundred of Years after, gave unto their Posterity from the *Babylonish* Captivity, the very Persons, who then were in being, were freed from the Insults and Oppression of their Enemies, who lately had them in Subjection, brought back again to their own Land, and (which is much more valuable to every good Man,) restored to the Exercise of the true Religion. This was not only a great Addition to all the Kindness which GOD had shewed to their Forefathers, but also an immediate and personal Obligation on themselves to change their Phrase, and express their extraordinary Thankfulness to their Almighty Deliverer, by saying (as he himself by his Prophet foretels, and also directs in my Text;) *The LORD liveth that hath brought up the Children of Israel from the Land of the North, and from all the Lands whither he had driven them.*

And thus I have done with the second Observation. It remains now, in the last place, that I apply what has been said to the Occasion of the present Solemnity, which I know not better how to do, than by putting every Man, that this Day hears me, upon a serious Consideration of these three Things :

FIRST, What GOD has, in antient or former Times, done for our Forefathers, or Predecessors, in this Kingdom.

SECONDLY, What, of later Days, he has been pleased to do for us, who are now alive.

THIRDLY, How, and after what manner, we may

may best express our Thankfulness to him, both for the one and the other.

And FIRST, For the former Days.

When holy Men of old, among the People of *Israel* at any time, set themselves, or others, to meditate on the many and great Mercies that GOD had bestowed upon their Nation, they usually carried their Thoughts a great way back, even to the first visible Beginnings of his Favour and Kindness towards their Ancestors. Upon these Occasions they called to Mind *the Covenant that GOD so graciously made with Abraham, and the Oath that he sware unto Isaac, Psal. cv. 9. How he smote Egypt in their First-born, and brought out Israel from among them, Psal. cxxxvi. 10, 11. How he smote great Nations and slew mighty Kings, Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, King of Bashan, and all the Kingdoms of Canaan, and gave their Lands for an Heritage, an Heritage unto Israel his People, Psal. cxxxv. 10.* These Things, I say, and such as these, altho' they had fallen out even divers Ages before, yet holy and good Men kept always in Remembrance, to the Intent that thereby their Hearts might be the more affected with a just Sense of GOD's Goodness towards them.

And in Imitation of this so excellent Pattern, give me Leave, in like manner, to look back to the first Arrival of the *British* in this Island, and from thence, in very few Words, to point unto you the great Success, and some of the chiefest Blessings, wherewith GOD's good Providence has ever since attended them.

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The Time will not allow me to set forth these Things at large: But (to give you a short View of them, and, for a fuller Account, referring you to the Histories of those Times and Transactions) that a handful of Men from *Britain*, who, about the Year 1169, came over hither at the Request, and to the Assistance of the King of *Leinster*, in all amounting but to 460, and afterwards receiving but a small Addition to their Number, should obtain such Victories, reduce so great a Part of this Island, as, in no more than three Years time, to prepare almost the whole, for a total Submission to the Crown of *ENGLAND*.

That, in the Year 1171, the Monarch of *Ireland*, (as he was called) with all the Kings and Princes of *Leinster*, *Connaught*, *Munster*, and the east Part of *Ulster*, should voluntarily submit themselves to King *Henry II.* and acknowledge him their supreme Lord, and that without a Drop of Blood shed; (as Sir *James Ware* remarks, *Annal.*) that from this time forward, the Crown of *England* should be attended with so much Success, in suppressing the Insurrections and Rebellions of the antient Natives, who, sometimes with the Assistance of foreign Force, endeavoured to shake off that Yoke to which so freely they had subjected themselves.

That the *Irish*, who, for so many Ages, had lived after awild and barbarous manner, with little more of Law amongst them than that of the strongest Hand, should, in Time, be brought to receive the *English* Laws and Form of Government, and thereby become, in a great measure, civilized,

civilized, and the Country, by degrees, safe for Men to plant, improve, and inhabit.

That the *Pope's* Power here, as well as in *England*, should be thrown off by King *Henry VIII.* and the Reformation, by Law established, under Queen *Elizabeth* of happy Memory.

That the *Gun-Powder* Plot, in *England*, was discovered and disappointed, which, if it had succeeded, would most certainly have involved this Kingdom also in Blood and Confusion.

That the horrid Rebellion and bloody Massacre of all *English Protestants* in this Kingdom, in the Year 1641, (a Design so closely laid, and in so great a measure effected) was yet so timely and wonderfully discovered, as in Part to be prevented, and the *Protestant* Interest here at length to be restored and secured, for which this memorable Day is for ever set apart as a Day of Thanksgiving to Almighty GOD. That after so much War, Confusion, and Usurpation, as, for near twenty Years together, had involved both this and the neighbouring Kingdoms, at length, in the Year 1660, the King, the Royal Family, the Laws, legal Government, and the true Religion, were, without any new Effusion of Blood, restored, and Peace and Quietness thereby again established among us.

All these great, and some of them inestimable Blessings, are, even the latest of them, beyond the Memory, and indeed before the Birth of most of us; and, therefore, are to be reckoned amongst those antient Mercies and Deliverances which

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which GOD has vouchsafed unto our Forefathers.

But yet the Fruits and good Effects of all these Blessings (however sometimes they have been interrupted and disturbed) are (blessed be GOD) derived down to us of this present Generation. To all these Things, in Conjunction, that have thus come to pass, as I have briefly recounted them unto you, we, under GOD, in a very great measure, owe the present Settlement of our Government and Church, the many good Laws, fair Possessions and Estates, thriving Cities and Towns, and commodious Beings and Habitations, in this fruitful and pleasant Land, upon which we justly set so great a Value.

And therefore as the People of *Israel*, after a very long Distance of Time, were yet obliged to look back, even to their Deliverance out of the Land of *Egypt*, and to bless GOD for that, and all other his Mercies, through so many Generations, vouchsafed unto their Forefathers: Let us, in like manner, never fail to recollect, and, with the most profound Thankfulness, call to Mind all those great and glorious Things which the same GOD, in a continued Succession of his good Providence for the Space of above 500 Years, has been doing for those of our Nation within this Kingdom. Let us, with Gratitude, I say, remember all these so long past Things, both as, at this Day, they are highly beneficial to us also, and as they well may be look'd on as *Earnests* and *Engagements*, on GOD's Part, of what he will yet farther do for

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us and our Posterity, if by our Sins and Transgressions, we do not forfeit our Title to his Favour.

And thus I have briefly offered to your Consideration, what GOD has, in former Times, done for our Forefathers and Predecessors in this Kingdom; which is the first Part of my Application. Let us now proceed,

SECONDLY, To what comes within the Compass of our own personal Knowledge and Remembrance.

There is no Man sure, who was of any competent Age, and within this Kingdom, from the Year 1688 to the End of 1691, that can forget the deplorable State and Condition in which the *Protestants of Ireland* then generally were. Our Substance in the Country taken away by open Day-light, and no Restitution made, nor any effectual Discouragement given to the Robbers, until we had scarce any thing left in the Field for them to take away: In Cities and Towns, our Houses and Families oppressed by quartering of Soldiers: Great Numbers of us frequently imprisoned, and otherwise harrassed, upon the slightest and most groundless Pretences: Very many, who had lived well, reduced to a perishing Condition, who must have starved, if their Brethren, that had yet a little left, had not, out of that little, given them Bread to support them: Great Part of those Estates which many of us had purchased and possessed, under the Security of the established Laws, taken from us by a pretended Repeal of those

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those very Laws, in order to dispossess us: And almost all the rest of our Estates, either brought under a Forfeiture by another pretended Law, or otherwise wasted and made useless, and altogether unprofitable to us: The Sword, and all other means of Defence taken from us, and put into the Hands of our professed Enemies; from whose Principles and former Practices we had reason to expect no less than utter Destruction and Extirpation, whenever they should find themselves past the Danger of an After-reckoning for the same: Thousands of Persons of the best Rank and Quality, and some of them of the Female Sex, who had fled, or thought it reasonable to remain in the neighbouring Kingdoms, (where some of them had been long before) attainted of Treason, and thereby not only brought under a Forfeiture of their Estates and Lives, but also, by Law, excluded from Pardon, and the Benefit of Remainders upon Settlements of Marriage, taken away even from those who were under Age, and therefore could not be so much as suspected of what they then here called Rebellion: Our Houses burnt, our Lives threatened, the Revenues of the established Church almost all taken away, and the Clergy left to starve or depend upon the Charity of their People, who had but little left them to support themselves and others of their Neighbours, who were utterly ruined: And our very Churches, contrary to the Laws then in force, and to several Proclamations pretended to be issued in our Favour, by an arbitrary Power in many Places taken from us, and some of them turned into Prisons, where great Numbers of our People were frequently confined, and must, in all Appearance,

pearance, have starved, if it had not been for the charitable Contributions of such of their Brethren as, for the present, had something left them in the midst of those common Calamities.

* All these Things and more (the Particulars of which the Time would soon fail me to enumerate) appeared then to us but as the *Beginning of our Sorrows*, Matth. xxiv. 8. of the End whereof, for a great while, we had but a very doubtful and melancholy Prospect: And what the final Event would have been, if *French*, and other *Papists*, had not been for the present restrained by the secret Hand of GOD, and rather by political Reasons, than any Considerations of Conscience or Christianity, no Man can be ignorant, who is but a little acquainted with the Principles and Practices of those of that Nation and Profession, especially when they were animated with the Hopes of advancing, at the same time, both their Religion and their temporal Interest.

It is true, indeed, in the midst of all these Pressures, GOD was pleased wonderfully to support our sinking Spirits with the Hopes of a speedy Deliverance, yet often our Fears, and the Weakness of Human Nature would again prevail; and as if some Part of the Curse, which

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* See all this at large in a Book entitled, *The State of the Protestants in Ireland under the late King JAMES's Government*, licenced by the Earl of Nottingham.

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GOD had threatened to the People of *Israel*, had fallen upon us, *In the Morning* we were apt to say, *Would God it were Even*, Deut. xxviii. 67. that the Darkness of the Night might conceal us from the Rage of our Enemies; and at *Even*, *Would GOD it were Morning*, that we might have the Day-light to fly from them; altho' all Passages being stopped, we knew not whither to go for Refuge but only to GOD, in whose good Providence we trusted.

From this sad and dismal Condition, our good GOD was pleased, in his great Mercy, to rescue us, by sending over our late gracious Sovereign King *William* of glorious Memory to our Relief, and blessing his Arms with Success, until, at last, our Friends and near Relations, who in Multitudes had fled to the neighbouring Countries there to subsist, many of them, upon Charity, returned home to us, our Fears were removed, our Lives secured, our Church, Religion, our Laws and Estates restored, and a new Scene of Safety and Prosperity (to which we had so long been Strangers) again opened unto us.

And altho', as a Punishment for our Sins, he thought fit within the Compass of a few Years, by Death, to remove both our Sovereign, whom he had raised up to be our Deliverer, and not very long before, his Royal Consort also, that most excellent Queen *Mary*, yet abundantly to repair this great Loss to us, he was pleased to preserve, and quietly to place both in the Throne, and generally in the Affections of all her Subjects, our present most gracious Sovereign Lady Queen
Anne,

Anne, (whom may the same GOD continue long in Safety and Prosperity to reign over us) to preserve her to us, I say, as a *Deborah*, with wise Counsels to rule and judge us at home, and to provide her with a *Barak*, a prudent and faithful General, with Courage and Conduct to lead Armies abroad, whereby the *Hand* of our *Israel*, has, with GOD's Blessing, hitherto prospered and prevailed against *Jabin the King of Canaan*, *Judg. iv. 24.* the common Enemy of *Europe*. Add to this, that the Succession to the *Crown* of these Realms is now, by good and wholesome Laws, so settled and established, and we by Oath so bound to maintain and uphold the same, as that, if we can be but true to ourselves and the Public, and will not run into the Sin of wilful Perjury, through GOD's Mercy and good Providence, we shall have little Reason to apprehend the Return of those Evils, or any of them under which we so lately groaned, either upon ourselves or our Posterity.

Thus by comparing our former Condition, within the Compass of our own Memory, with our present happy Circumstances, (I mean if we be not wanting to our own Happiness,) we may fully perceive how great that Deliverance is which GOD, of his Mercy, has of late vouchsafed to us. And if that Generation of the People of the *Jews*, to whom my Text refers, had, with GOD's own Approbation, greater Reason to remember and rejoice at their own Deliverance from the Captivity of *Babylon*, than that of their Forefathers from the Land of *Egypt*: The like Reason altogether have we, with a greater degree of Joy and Thankfulness, to

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praise Almighty GOD for the great Blessings which we, in our own Persons, have received from him by means of the late happy *Revolution*, than for those of the like sort which are derived down to us from our Forefathers and Predecessors. *Antient Mercies and Deliverances ought always indeed to be remembered with Thankfulness; but those of later Date require a greater and higher degree of Gratitude from us.*

And this brings me to the third and last Part of my Application, which was to consider how, and after what manner, we may best express our Thankfulness to GOD both for the one and the other.

To be thankful to GOD, is certainly to love him; and *the Love of GOD*, we are expressly told, *is to keep his Commandments*, 1 John v. 3. If then all the *Goodness* which he has shewed to us has effectually led us to *Repentance*, Rom. ii. 4. If the Consideration both of his former and later Mercies and Deliverances has wrought so far upon our Hearts, as to bring us to a sincere and entire Obedience to all his Laws: If thereby we are become truly pious and devout toward GOD, sober and temperate with respect to ourselves, just, true, charitable in our Behaviour towards all Mankind: If *denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, we have learned to live *soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*, Tit. ii. 12.

Then indeed, with Comfort and Satisfaction, we may assure ourselves that our good GOD will accept and own us as a thankful People, that for the Time to come he will *delight in us*,
Numb.

Numb. xiv. 8. and continue his Favour and Loving-kindness towards us.

But if the Reverse of all this appears in our Lives and Actions: If Religion itself and GOD's Laws are slighted, his Worship neglected, his holy Ordinances contemned, and his Name profaned: If Seriousness and Sobriety be even despised and laughed at, and Riot, Lewdness, and Debauchery, if not directly approved of, yet very little discountenanced, or looked on as really scandalous, especially in a Gentleman: If the poor and momentary Satisfactions of this World are ordinarily preferred before the Hopes of Heaven and eternal Happiness, and Truth and Sincerity, Justice and Charity but little regarded, whenever they come in Competition with any temporal Interest or Enjoyment: If even the slightest Injuries are commonly revenged, and greater ones seldom or never forgiven: If, upon all Occasions we can readily bestow our Wealth even on Trifles and Vanities, and suffer the Poor to starve and perish for want of a little Relief, that well may be spared out of our Superfluities: If these, I say, and such like Practices prevail amongst us, well may GOD expostulate with us as an ungrateful Nation, and say, as he does to the Children of *Israel*, *Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish People and unwise?* Deut. xxxii. 6. Or in another Place, *Hear O Heavens, and give Ear O Earth, for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me,* Isai. i. 2.

Again; It is as always an essential Ingredient in the Virtue of Gratitude, for a Man to set a due

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Value upon the Kindness he has received; and whosoever has a lower Esteem of a Favour than it deserves, can never be truly thankful for it.

Now, besides all the private Blessings in which every one of us have a Share, by means of GOD's former, and more especially his later Deliverance vouchsafed unto us, on which (private Blessings I mean) we are too often apt to set the greatest Value; there are two that are of public, and indeed of universal Concern to us, I mean a most excellent Form of Government in our *Civil State*, and a truly Apostolical Constitution in our *Established Church*. The former of these is better known to you (Honourable Patriots) than I can pretend to describe it: But for the latter: If the full and free Enjoyment of every thing which GOD has made necessary to Salvation, without the Imposition of any one thing in the least destructive of it: If a Form of Ecclesiastical Polity and Ministry, universally settled in the Christian World by the Apostles themselves: If Purity of Doctrine, an excellent Liturgy and Form of Worship, and wholesome Laws and Canons, which only want Countenance and Encouragement to render them effectual to the good Purposes for which they were made: If all this, I say, be sufficient to render the Constitution of a Church truly valuable, our established Church and Constitution, which includes them all, must ever be reckoned as such.

If then all of us, in our several Stations, are impartially zealous to maintain and preserve both our Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitution,
upon

upon that very Bottom on which our Laws have placed them, it is a good Sign that we are truly thankful to GOD that he has more than once restored, and hitherto preserved them unto us. But if Maxims in Civil Politics, that are not according to the Frame of our Laws, are spread, and industriously advanced, and that in both those very Extremes that formerly, at several times, had like for ever to have ruined these Nations; and the very Name of *Moderation*, tho' owned to be a Virtue, first misinterpreted, and then exposed as both odious and ridiculous: If Schism and Separation, and sometimes even Popery, are not only connived at in tender Consciences, but also permitted to abuse, vilify, and in some Places to out-brave the *Established Church*; it is an Argument that we have not generally the Value for our Constitution either in *State* or *Church* that we ought to have, and consequently, that we are not sufficiently thankful for the Restitution of either of them.

The Apostle St. *John* represents it as a false and absurd Thing for a Man to say he *loves GOD*, 1 John iv. 20. or, consequently, is truly thankful to him, if he be not likewise a Lover of his *Brother*: Our blessed Saviour has also expressly told us, *that every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to Desolation*, Matt. xii. 25. Let every Man therefore seriously consider, how it is possible for him, either truly to shew himself grateful to GOD, or honestly to promote the Peace and Welfare of his Country, if he has any Hand in fomenting or keeping up those uncharitable Animosities and Divisions, that of late have so unhappily been brought in here amongst us.

What

What is, or can be the Meaning of it, that Men who agree in all the substantial Principles and Practices both of Loyalty and Religion, who are firm to the *Established Church*, faithful to the *Queen*, true to the *Laws* and Succession of the *Crown*, as thereby established, who unanimously bless GOD for the late happy *Revolution*, which sufficiently shews that they are satisfied as to the Lawfulness of it: That these Men, I say, on account of Differences in their Speculations and Hypotheses, concerning the Original of Civil Government, (which yet at the late *Revolution* appeared to have no different Influence, or but very little upon their Practice;) nay sometimes, on the score of some different Words and Schemes of Expression, which no Law of GOD or Man either forbids, or requires to be used; should brand one another with odious Names of Distinction, and thereby rend both the Church and State into Parties, which give our common Enemies no small Advantage against us. Pernicious Opinions and evil Practices ought, no doubt, to be censured and punished; and the evil Consequences of them, with timely Care and Caution, prevented: But upon bare, and often groundless Suspicions, to brand either Parties or Persons, with such odious Imputations as cannot fairly be proved or made out against them; as it is not at all agreeable either to Justice or Charity, so can it only tend to disturb the Peace and Quiet of the Nation, and upon both these Accounts, as altogether ungrateful and displeasing unto GOD. But I shall no farther pursue this unpleasant Subject; and it is high time to come to a Conclusion.

And

And that I may, in a Word or two, recapitulate the Sum of all that has been said: If we have any just Sense of all the Favours and Blessings, which, in a Course of above 500 Years, GOD, in his good Providence, has been heaping on our Nation within this Kingdom, and of the various Benefits and good Effects of them, which we at this Day enjoy: If we have a sufficient Value for this last signal Deliverance which he has vouchsafed to us, in our own Persons, by the late happy *Revolution*, and all the good Consequences thereof, both spiritual and temporal, that still remain unto us: Let us not fail, in all the proper Methods we can, to express our Thankfulness to the great LORD and Giver of all Goodness for the same: Let us not only praise him *in the Congregation of the Saints*, Psa. cxlix. 1. Psa. cxv. 1. and ascribe all Honour and Glory to his Name; but let us make it the great Work and Business of our Lives to keep all his Commandments, and do whatever may be pleasing and acceptable in his Sight: Let us shew what Esteem we put upon the Blessings he has given us, by our joint Endeavours to preserve them, and to make that right use of them for which they were bestowed upon us.

And since Love and Charity, Peace and Unity, are Things most highly, and in a particular manner, pleasing to him, and no less advantageous and beneficial to ourselves; let the Promotion of these, in Church and in State, in Public and in Private, be the conscientious Care and Endeavour of every Man in his proper Station. To which End and Purpose, let the Exhortation of the blessed Apostle St. Paul, make a deep and

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and lasting Impression on the Heart of every one of us. The Words are as applicable and useful to the Affairs of the *Kingdom*, and indeed of every Society whatever, as to those of the *Church*, 1 Cor. i. 10. *Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our LORD Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you: But that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment.* Which that we may always be, in every thing that tends to the Honour of GGD, the Safety and Purity of his Church and Religion, the Preservation of the Queen's Person and Royal Prerogative, the Continuance of the Crown in the Protestant Line, as by Law it is settled, the just Rights of the People, as by Law also secured unto them, the Peace and Happiness of Mankind, and the eternal Salvation of us all, GOD of his Mercy grant, for the Merits, and through the Mediation of Jesus Christ our LORD, *Amen.*

F I N I S.



